Some Considerations

Concerning the

TRINITY:

And the Ways of Managing that

CONTROVERSIE.

The Second Edition.

TOGETHER

With a DEFENCE of them

Against the

OBJECTIONS

OF THE

Dean of St. *Pauls.*

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THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

THIS Diſcourſe was Written ſome time ago for the Private Satisfaction of the Author, who thought that *a proper Seaſon for an Impartial Enquiry into the Doctrine of the Trinity,* when *ſeveral Perſons of different Opinions in that Point had juſt before appeared in the Controverſie about it; and their Printed Papers being canvas'd over again in Converſation, had produced many New Remarks upon the ſame Subject. Which Advantages, together with what he had formerly read, having, as he judged, given him a pretty full comprehenſion of the Matters in Diſpute, he took the following Method of Re examining that part of*

his Faith, and Justifying what he believed to his own Reason and Conscience. Some Persons to whom he communicated what he had writ, advised him to Print it: Which he had done before now, upon the Judgment of a Great and Learned Man of the Church, Dr. Scot. *lately dead, who was pleased to approve the Papers, without knowing to whom they belonged: But Occasion being given him to fore-see some little Objections, which might, probably, at that particular time, have in some measure obstructed his Good Intentions in Printing them, he thought fit to defer the Publication of them till a more convenient Opportunity, such as he judges this to be, when the Controversie of the Trinity is managed in such a manner as to offend a great many, and satisfie very few; and the Church is like to suffer very much by the too Adventurous Attempts made by some to Vindicate her Doctrines.*

Those who pretend to Explain the Distinction in the Godhead *by* Modes, Offices, Relations, *and the like, are censured*

as

as ſaying too little, and coming much below the Characters of Diſtinction to be found in Scripture; though, at the ſame time they uſe theſe Terms, they acquaint us that they uſe them in a different Senſe from any they are taken in, when applied to Creatures, *and in a ſenſe importing greater Difference, but ſuch as is not conceivable by Human Underſtanding.*

And ſome of thoſe who call the Three Divine Perſons, *Three Infinite* Minds, Spirits, *or* Subſtances, *would not be thought to mean by theſe Expreſſions, That the Three Perſons in the Godhead are as much diſtinguiſhed from one another as Three* Men, *or Three* Angels *are; but that the Diſtinction betwixt them is ſo great, that no other Terms can reach it, though theſe do ſomewhat exceed what they would ſignifie by them: Which Diſtinction, leſs than theſe Expreſſions, in the common uſe of them, do import, and higher than any other can come up to, is acknowledg'd likewiſe to be inconceivable.*

Which

Which being obſerved by the Author of this Diſcourſe, he thought it more Adviſable to uſe no New Terms *with a Deſign of Explaining what, by the Confeſſion of Perſons of different ſides in the Diſpute, is not to be rendred more conceivable. And, to Juſtifie his Opinion in this Matter, he has endeavoured to prove that no New Terms can be uſed to any ſuch purpoſe. And this, he thinks, he has made very Evident by the Account he has given of what we can* diſtinctly conceive, *and what we can* confuſedly believe *of the Doctrine of the Trinity; which ought carefully to be diſtinguiſh'd in all Diſquiſitions upon Subjects of this Nature.*

As for thoſe who will allow only a pure Nominal *Diſtinction in the Godhead; or that apply the Terms* Son *and* Holy Ghoſt *to meer* Created Beings, *he has only the* Language *and* Deſign *of Scripture to oppoſe to them; which ſeem to* him *utterly irreconcileable to ſuch Notions, and he hopes thoſe general Reflections he has drawn from thence*

thence will make this appear ſo to others. *But the Opinion of thoſe who make the Perſons in the Godhead* as diſtinct *as* Three Men, *or* Three Angels, *he is ſure, both from* Revelation *and* Reaſon, *is* falſe: *And that advancing any ſuch Explications of the Trinity, as will fairly bear this Conſtruction, is of ſuch dangerous Conſequence, that he hopes he has done ſome Service to Religion by proving, That* Three Perſons in the Godhead as diſtinct as Three Men, or Three Angels,, *is not only an* Incomprehenſible Notion, *but an* Impoſſible Thing; *which implies a manifeſt Contradiction to the plaineſt and ſureſt Principles of our Knowledge.*

Having given this ſhort Account of the Author, *and* his Performance *in this Diſcourſe, I have only this further to acquaint his Readers with, That he deſires they would believe him to be a ſincere Man, that has a ſerious Regard for Religion and no other aims behind what he profeſſes: For, whatever his* Arguments *are, he is ſure his* Deſign

ſign *is good*: *And, that his Reaſoning may appear ſo too, he would be glad that They who take up theſe Papers would give them the Reading over, before they paſs any Judgment upon what is advanced in them*; *For, the Diſcourſe being written in the* Demonſtrative way, *where the* Main Concluſions *are eſtabliſh'd by a long Train of* Preparatory Proofs, *no true Judgment can be made but upon the whole together.*

May it pleaſe God to make theſe Endeavours of the Author ſucceſsful to Satisfie and Unite the Minds of Men in their Belief of the Doctrine of the Trinity; *or may* He *direct ſome abler Perſons to find out more Effectual Methods of Eſtabliſhing the* Primitive Faith, *and ſettling the* Preſent Peace *of the Church.*

SOME

SOME CONSIDERATIONS Concerning the TRINITY, &c.

THere's no part of the Chriſtian Faith has produced ſo many Diſputes and Controverſies, ſuch a numerous Variety of Opinions and Sects, as the *Doctrine of the Bleſſed Trinity*. If we conſult the large Catalogues of Primitive Hereſies, we ſhall find the far greateſt Number of them nothing elſe but ſo many ſeveral Modes and Ways of Explaining the Common Undivided Nature and Eſſence of the Trinity, and the different Offices and Operations of each Perſon.

How far the Uncertainty of our Faith in theſe Points, the many Abſurd and Blaſphemous Expoſitions that have been made of them, and the warm and indiſcreet Management of contrary Parties, have contributed to the Prejudice of Religion, and the Scandal of

its Profeſſors, has been a common Obſervation and Complaint in all Chriſtian Ages: And ſeveral Expedients have been propoſed for the Redreſſing of this Miſchief; but all Attempts of this kind have hitherto miſcarried. The principal Reaſon of which I humbly conceive to be this; that thoſe who have laboured in this good Deſign have for the moſt part proceeded upon wrong Meaſures.

Now the Methods that have been generally and chiefly inſiſted upon, are Three; which are all improper, or inſufficient, and have therefore proved ineffectual, as will plainly appear upon a particular Examination of each.

1. Firſt then, There are ſome who are for Reverencing the Myſtery of the Trinity, without ever looking into it at all; who think it ought not to be the Subject either of Diſpute or Enquiry: imagining that every thing of this high and tranſcendent Nature is propoſed to us only as a Tryal and Exerciſe of our Faith; and the more implicit that is, the fuller do we expreſs our truſt and relyance upon God.

Nay, farther, There are thoſe who do not ſcruple to ſay, the more Contradictions the better; the greater the Struggle and Oppoſition of *Reaſon*, the greater is the Triumph and Merit of our *Faith*.

But there's no likelihood of ſuppreſſing any of our Doubts or Diſputes in Religion this way:

way: For beſides the Natural Propenſion of the Soul to the ſearch of Truth, and the ſtrong and impatient deſire we have to know as much as ever we can of what immediately concerns us, 'tis generally and very juſtly look'd upon both as the Priviledge and Duty of Man to Enquire and Examine before he believes or judges; and never to give up his aſſent to any thing but upon Good and Rational Grounds: And therefore 'twould be a very hard thing to perſwade the World to ſtifle and reſtrain ſo many Powerful Motives of Action. But ſhould they be farther prevailed upon to go directly contrary to their Reaſon, 'twould be much more difficult to Conquer the uneaſineſs of the Reluctance.

And indeed 'tis well the difficulties of ſubduing the Underſtanding are too great to be maſter'd; For a ſlight Reflection will ſerve to convince us, that the neceſſary Conſequences of a blind Reſignation of Judgment would be far more Fatal to Chriſtianity than all our preſent Diviſions.

What Blaſphemies and Contradictions may and have been impoſed upon mens belief, under the Venerable Name of Myſteries? And how eaſie are Villainous Practices derived from an Abſurd Faith? This is matter of common Obſervation, and has brought a juſt Scandal upon a large Party of Chriſtians, and given occaſion to Men of light, undiſtinguiſh-

ing Capacities, to deny and ſcoff at the Saving Truths of the Goſpel, becauſe they were accompanied with a ridiculous mixture of Errors.

No doubt therefore we may, and ought carefully to Examine the Faith and Principles we deſign for the Rule of our Lives, and endeavour to underſtand all our Religion ſo far, as to be able to Juſtifie it, both to our Selves and Unbelievers.

We ought indeed to proceed with all the Caution and Humility imaginable, and take a juſt Eſtimate of our *Task* and *Abilities:* But to be denied the Liberty either of uſing or obeying our Reaſon, is a ſuſpicious as well as an unjuſt Reſtraint.

2. There are others, who call the Doctrine of the *Trinity* an Incomprehenſible *Myſtery*, and yet are at a great deal of pains to bring it down to a Level with Human Underſtanding; and are all very earneſt to have their own particular Explications acknowledged as neceſſary Articles of Faith: But the number and diſagreement of the Expoſitors plainly diſcover the vanity of ſuch Pretences.

This has proved ſo unſucceſsful a way, that inſtead of uniting the different Judgments of Chriſtians in one Point, it has broke the Controverſie into a Thouſand more: For Zeal and Oppoſition raiſing up a great many Aſſertors of the Common Belief, and every one look-

looking out for ſome new Terms and Modes of Speech, which might be fuller and more expreſſive than thoſe in Queſtion, the Differences and Diſputes were by conſequence proportionably multiplyed. For the Terms and Forms of Speech made uſe of being capable of ſeveral ſenſes, and each of them attended with other Acceſſory Idea's, Miſtakes muſt neceſſarily ariſe, and divers new Thoughts be ſuggeſted to ſuch whoſe Heads were employed upon the ſame Subject: And thus it came to paſs, that *Defences* and *Vindications* of the Orthodox Faith produced more *Hereſies*.

Wherefore in all ſuch Matters as theſe, which are too big to be graſp'd, we had better ſit down contented with what we have firm hold of, than tire our ſelves with vain Endeavours to take in more. 'Twould certainly be the trueſt, and the ſafeſt way, ſtrictly to confine our ſelves to *Scripture Expreſſions*, and never ſpeak of *Supernatural Things*, but in the *Language of Revelation*; which being the proper Standard of all other Words that ſhall be uſed on theſe Occaſions, 'tis in vain to ſhift the Meaſure, when there's never another to be found which can or ought to reach farther.

It may, however, ſometimes be neceſſary to change this Method, and introduce *New Terms* to ſecure the True Faith againſt the Falſe Interpretations of ſuch as pervert Scripture. For if Hereticks will make uſe of New Expreſſions

to contradict the received Doctrine, we must have New Terms to express the same Truth in, in Opposition to their Heresie. And in this case the Church may very reasonably require her Members to shew their steady continuance in the *Ancient Faith*, by the use of such Terms as plainly infer their denyal of any later erroneous Inventions set up against it.

3. There are a Third sort of Men in the World, who pretend, That there is no *Mystery* proposed to us as an Object of Faith; and in order to make this of the *Trinity* appear to be none, they bring a Cloud over the whole Bible, and with strange forc'd Criticisms and Allegories give the very plainest Texts such an unusual Mysterious turn, as neither the Language will bear, nor is any ways consistent with the Design or Character of the Holy Writers.

But this is a very odd preposterous Method of Explaining Scripture, by darkening a great part of it to illustrate the rest; and as ridiculous a Project of healing Divisions, as pulling down a whole Side of standing Wall to mend a Breach.

And after all, the *Socinian Hypothesis* seems to me to have more of *Mystery*, and *Contradiction* to Natural Reason in it, than what is objected to the *Catholick Doctrine*.

I am

I am nor for clogging the Faith, not multiplying *Myſteries:* yet we ought not preſently to deny what we do not underſtand; but ſoberly, and impartially conſider how much we are *able to comprehend,* and how far we are *obliged to Believe,* what we do not.

The Method therefore I deſign to obſerve in the following Diſcourſe, ſhall be different from any of thoſe now mentioned. I ſhall not go about to preſs Men to a *Blind Veneration*, or *Preſumptuous Belief* of any thing *without Examination*, or *in Deſtance to Reaſon:* I ſhall not offer to impoſe any *New Arbitrary Explications* of my own upon other mens Conſciences; but confine my ſelf wholly to the uſual *warranted Forms* of Expreſſion. I will not wreſt and ſtrain Scripture to help out a Private Notion, nor do any thing to betray the Juſt Rights and Priviledges of our Common Reaſon; but carefully endeavour to diſtinguiſh *How far the Doctrine of the Trinity is a Myſtery*, and *how far a Myſtery may become an Object of Faith:* From whence I hope to make it appear, that nothing hard or unreaſonable is required of us by our Church for the belief of this Article.

In order to which, I ſhall rank all my Reflections upon this Subject, under theſe Three Heads of Enquiry.

I. What it is that perplexes and obſcures our Faith in the Trinity.
II. What is ſufficient for Chriſtians to believe concerning this Point.
III. What ill Conſequences can attend ſuch a Faith.

I. Firſt then, I am to Enquire, What it is that perplexes and obſcures our Faith in *the Holy Trinity*. For before I enter upon a diſtinct and particular Conſideration of the Doctrine it ſelf, 'tis neceſſary to point out ſome of the Principal Cauſes which have occaſioned ſo many Falſe, Abſurd, and Ineffectual Expoſitions of it. And they are theſe four:

The Prejudice and Bigotry of Men indiſcreetly Pious.
The Vanity and Deſign of ſuch as value themſelves upon inventing New Notions, or laughing at the Old ones.
The not diſcerning or conſidering the Bounds and Limits of our Knowledge.
And laſtly, An imprudent Choice of improper ways of Expreſſion.

The two firſt of theſe have a general Influence upon all Religious Controverſies, but are more eſpecially concerned in this: For there's never more room for Superſtitious and Rigo-

rous

rous Impoſitions, nor fairer Advantages for Cavilling, and drawing abſurd Conſequences, than where a *Myſtery* is the Subject of Debate.

There are ſome who are apt to be concerned, and cry out, as if the very Foundations of all Religion were overturning, when any particular Scheme or Notion they are fond of, is called in Queſtion. On the other ſide, I have no ſmall Reaſon to believe there are ſeveral who ſtrike at *Chriſtianity* it ſelf, under the Pretence of bringing down the value of *Myſteries*.

And indeed if we conſider the general Temper of Mankind, 'tis no wonder that there's more *Superſtition* and *Infidelity* in the World than *True Religion*: For believing every thing, and believing nothing, a ſudden Veneration or Contempt of whatſoever is propoſed to us, equaly gratifie the lazy Inclinations of the Soul; which loves an eaſie undiſturbed courſe of Thoughts, and is very difficultly brought to endure the Labour of Attention and Enquiry. Nay, of thoſe who ſeem to have conquer'd this Trouble, there are few who lay themſelves out in a free and impartial ſearch of Truth; the greateſt part even of theſe are employed wholly in the purſuit of ſome Notion they have beforehand taken up, and are reſolved to maintain: They are already determined what to believe, and only ſeek out Arguments to Juſtifie or Recommend their Opinions to others.

How

How far theſe general Reflections are applicable to the preſent Caſe, has been hinted at already in the beginning of this Diſcourſe; where 'tis very diſcernible from the Ways and Methods made uſe of for ſetling the Doctrine of the Trinity, that *Prejudice* and *Vanity*, a *falſe Zeal*, and an *ill grounded Contempt* have had a large ſhare in the Management of this Controverſie.

Another Reaſon why our Endeavours of Expounding this Point have been vain and unſucceſsful, is the want of diſcerning or conſidering the *Bounds* and *Limits of our Knowledge*; from whence it comes to paſs, that oftentimes we ſtrive to ſoar above our pitch, and imagine we underſtand ſome things better than really we do. But eſpecially Men of Abſtracted Thinking are very apt to deceive themſelves with falſe Idea's, and are firmly perſwaded they conceive things diſtinctly, which they have but a confuſed Notion of. As for inſtance; It has been delivered down, as the conſtant Faith of a long Succeſſion of Eminent Philoſophers, that the whole *Subſtance*, *Nature*, and *Eſſence* of the *Soul* is *wholly and entirely* in *all the Body* conſidered together, and *wholly and entirely* in *every ſingle Particle* of it. And this is a Notion which at firſt view has a great appearance of truth and clearneſs, and is ſuch as the Underſtanding readily cloſes with: But if we would ſtrictly and diſtinctly

diſtinctly Examine our ſelves, what we mean by thoſe Terms, I believe we ſhould be able to give but a very obſcure Account of Our Opinion; and at laſt be forced to confeſs we underſtand no more than this by them, That the *Soul is the Principle of all the Operations performed in the Body.* But ſo it ſometimes happens, that we are tranſported too far in our Enquires after hidden Truths, till we are loſt in Speculation, and vainly think to Fathom the depths of Knowledge and Wiſdom, without conſidering the Shortneſs of our Line: Whereas we ought rather to examine, and find out the Bounds of our Thoughts, know the juſt extent and compaſs of our Underſtanding; and then reſt ſatisfied with what we are *Capable* of, without *deſiring to know more than we can*, or *pretending to know more than we do.*

But further, the Doctrine of the Trinity has ſuffered very much by the Diſcourſes made about it upon another Account; And that is, that ſome of the Authors of ſuch Diſcourſes have imprudently made choice of improper ways of Expreſſion: Either perplexing plain Revelation too much with *Philoſophical Terms* and *Niceties*, or expoſing the Faith to contempt, by *homely indecent Similes*, and *diſproportionate Compariſons.*

Now

Now to keep clear of all thoſe Rocks which Others ſeem to have ſplit upon, I have endeavoured, what I could, to deliver my ſelf from Prejudice and Confuſion of Terms, and to ſpeak Juſtly and Intelligibly: And not being yet prepoſſeſt in favour of any particular Explication, the better to preſerve my freedom of Examining the Subject in hand, I have purpoſely forborn to ſearch the *Fathers*, *Schoolmen*, or *Fratres Poloni*, or to read over any *later Treatiſes* concerning the Controverſie while I was compoſing the preſent Eſſay; reſolving to conſult nothing but *Scripture*, and my *own Natural Sentiments*, and draw all my Reflections from thence; taking only ſuch which eaſily, and without conſtraint offered themſelves.

II. And thus having cleared the way, and removed every thing which I thought might obſtruct or miſguide my Enquiries, I come, in the ſecond place, to conſider the Doctrine it ſelf; and Faithfully and Impartially to Examine what is *ſufficient for Chriſtians to believe concerning the Trinity*, or, which is all one in this caſe, *what is neceſſary to be believed:* For certainly he believes enough, and cannot in reaſon be taxed for a narrow defective Faith, who believes as much as is required of him.

For

For the better proceeding in which Enquiry, I ſhall lay down this as an evident Truth, which every Man will grant me, that nothing is *neceſſary to be believed*, but 1. *what's poſſible to be believed*; and 2. *what's plainly revealed.*

But here I would be underſtood, as to the laſt part of the Aſſertion, only of ſuch matters which are known to us no other way than by *Revelation.* For in ſeveral other caſes, I confeſs, we may be obliged to believe meerly upon *Humane Teſtimony*: Nay, even *Revelation* it ſelf, as it is a matter of Fact, claims our Aſſent upon no higher a ground.

But further, I ſhall take this for granted too in a Proteſtant Country, that *Scripture* is the only Standard of all Neceſſary Revealed Truths: Neither in the preſent Inſtance is there any room for a *Traditionary Faith.* For, beſides that all the Fathers and Ancient Writers ground their Expoſitions of the Trinity wholly upon Scripture, I cannot conceive that the Subject is capable of a plainer Revelation, as I ſhall endeavour to ſhew more fully in the following Diſcourſe.

We are therefore, in the firſt place, to conſider how far 'tis *poſſible to believe a Trinity*; and next, to examine *what the Scripture requires us to believe* in this matter.

Now, there are two Conditions requiſite to make it poſſible for us to believe a thing.

1. That

1. That we know the Terms of what we are to aſſent to. 2. That it imply no contradiction to our former Knowledge; ſuch Knowledge I mean which is accompanied with Certainty and Evidence.

Firſt then, we can believe a thing no further than we underſtand the *Terms* in which it is propoſed to us: For *Faith* concerns only the *Truth and Falſhood of Propoſitions*; and the Terms, of which a Propoſition conſiſts, muſt be firſt underſtood before we can pronounce any thing concerning the Truth or Falſhood of it; which is nothing elſe but the *Agreement or Diſagreement of its Terms, or the Idea's* expreſſed by them. If I have *no Knowledge at all* of the meaning of the Terms uſed in a Propoſition, I cannot exerciſe any Act of my Underſtanding about it, I cannot ſay, *I believe or disbelieve any thing*; my Soul is perfectly in the ſame ſtate it was before, without receiving any new Determination: And if I have but *a general confuſed Notion of the Terms*, I can give only *a general confuſed Aſſent to the* Propoſition. So my *Faith* will always bear an Eqval Proportion to my *Knowledge* of the Subject-matter to be believed.

To make this plainer by an Inſtance; ſuppoſe I am required to believe that *A.* is equal to *B*: If I don't know either what *A.* or *B.* ſtands for, or have no Notion of Equality, I believe nothing

nothing more than I did before this was propoſed to me; I am not capable of any new determinate Act of Faith. All that I can believe in this caſe can amount to no more than this, that *Something has ſome reſpect to Something elſe*; that the Matter I am required to believe, is affirmed by a Perſon of great Knowledge and Integrity, who ought to be credited in what he ſays; and therefore the Propoſition here laid down is probably true in that ſenſe the Author means. And what am I the wiſer for all this? What addition is there made to my Faith or Knowledge by ſuch a Propoſition? But farther, ſuppoſe I know that *A.* and *B.* ſtand for *two Lines*, and that by *Equal Lines* is meant *Lines of the ſame length*; ſuch Knowledge can produce only a *general confuſed belief*, that there is ſome certain *Line imaginable* juſt of the *ſame length with ſome other Line:* But if by *A.* and *B.* are meant *two right Lines*, which are the *Sides* of a *given Triangle*, and I take a Mathematician's Word for it, without demonſtration, that they are *equal*, or of *the ſame length*, this is a *particular diſtinct Act of Faith*; by which I am ſatisfied of the Truth of ſomething which I did not *believe* or *know* before.

From whence it follows, that *Terms* and *ſimple Idea's* muſt be *clearly* and *diſtinctly* underſtood firſt, before we can believe any thing *particular* of the *reſpects* and *relations* they bear

to

to one another, which is the only *proper Object of Faith.*

Another Condition neceſſary to render a thing capable of being believed is, that it implys no Contradiction to our former Knowledge: I cannot conceive how 'tis poſſible to give our aſſent to any thing that contradicts the plain Dictates of our Reaſon, and thoſe evident Principles from whence we derive all our other Knowledge.

As for Example; I do not ſee how any Authority of Revelation can overthrow the Truth of this Propoſition, *That the Whole is bigger than any of its Parts.* For

Firſt, I cannot more clearly and diſtinctly perceive any external Impreſſions made upon my Soul, nor be more certain that ſuch Impreſſions proceed from God, than I can perceive, and be aſſured, that the *Idea's* I have of *whole* and *part* bear this Relation to one another.

Secondly, The Nature and Conſtitution of Things makes it impoſſible that this Propoſition ſhould be falſe; for ſuch and ſuch Things or Notions being ſuppoſed, ſuch and ſuch Habitudes and Reſpects muſt neceſſarily reſult from them. So long therefore as I have the ſame *Idea's* of *whole* and *part*, and the ſame Faculties of Perception, I ſhall always perceive the ſame relation betwixt them: And if my

Idea's

Idea's of *whole* and *part* were changed, or a new Texture and Frame of Soul given me, I ſhould indeed perceive different relations betwixt theſe new *Idea's*; but this would by no means deſtroy the Truth of my former Conceptions; 'twould ſtill be certain, according to the *Idea's* I had before of *whole* and *part*, that the *whole* was bigger than any of its *parts*: Which *Idea's* will always unalterably have the ſame relation to one another. But

Thirdly, Was it poſſible this Propoſition could be falſe, conſidering only the nature of the Things themſelves, the Nature of God furniſhes us with other Arguments of the Truth, and Certainty of it. And

1*ſt*. It is not conſiſtent with the Juſtice, Wiſdom, or Goodneſs of God, to require us to believe that, which, according to the Frame and Make he has given us, 'tis impoſſible for us to believe: For however ſome Men have advanced this abſurd Paradox, that God can make Contradictions true, I am very certain, that upon an impartial Trial of their Faculties, they would find 'twere perfectly out of their power to believe explicitly, and in the common Senſe of the Terms, that a Part can be bigger than the Whole it is a Part of. But

2*dly*. Admitting it poſſible for us to be deceived in ſuch Propoſitions which have a conſtant, uniform, and univerſal appearance of Truth and Evidence, this would deſtroy all

manner of Certainty and Knowledge, and leave us wholly in Darkneſs, Ignorance, and Deſpair; or, which is more Injurious to the Divine Goodneſs to imagine, under an abſolute neceſſity of being deceived: For 'tis not only impoſſible for me to believe, that ſuch a Propoſition as this, That the *Whole is bigger than any of its Parts* is falſe; but I cannot deny my *poſitive expreſs aſſent* to it as true: The Light and Evidence in this Caſe is ſo clear and ſtrong, that I am not at Liberty ſo much as to *ſuſpend* my Judgment.

3*dly*. 'Tis Blaſphemy to think, that God can contradict himſelf; and therefore *right Reaſon* being the Voice of God, as well as *Revelation*, they can never be directly contrary to one another.

Now to apply all this to the preſent Caſe; ſuppoſe I am required to believe, That *One and the ſame God is Three different Perſons*: I only ſuppoſe it here, becauſe I have not yet proved *how far*, and *in what ſenſe*, we are *obliged to believe a Trinity*. If this, I ſay, be the Propoſition I am required to give my aſſent to, 'tis plain, by what has been proved before, that I can believe it no farther than the *Terms*, of which it is made up, are *known* and *underſtood*, and the *Ideas* ſignified by them *conſiſtent*.

In order therefore to form a *determinate Act of Faith* in this Point, I muſt carefully examine

examine my ſelf what Notions I have of *God*, of *Unity* and *Identity*, *Diſtinction* and *Number*, and *Perſon*.

As to the Notion of a *Deity*, 'tis true indeed I have not a *full and adequate Idea of* God, neither is my Soul capable of it; but what Conceptions I have of his Nature and Perfections, are, according to my Apprehenſion, ſo far clear, as to enable me truly and juſtly to determine which of thoſe diſtinct *Idea's*, I have in my Mind, are applicable to him, and which are not. And ſuch a Knowledge of the Divine Nature as this, is a ſufficient direction of my Faith in any Propoſition concerning God, where I clearly underſtand all the *Idea's* attributed to him.

In the next place therefore, I am to conſider what Notions I have of *Unity* and *Identity*, *Diſtinction* and *Number*.

And here I confeſs I am at a Loſs how to deliver my ſelf, theſe being ſome of our *firſt and moſt ſimple Idea's* which are ſo Clear of themſelves, that I cannot find Clearer to explain them by.

For this is certain, that every Man is conſcious to himſelf, that he has a power of *perceiving* and *comparing his Perceptions*, and conſequently muſt know, when any thing is preſented to his Mind, whether it be perceivable at *one entire view*, and whether the Object have *one uniform appearance* or not: He muſt

be alſo ſenſible in a ſucceſſion of *Idea's*, when the *ſame* Appearances are *repeated* again, and how often the Repreſentation is *varied*.

However, notwithſtanding the Clearneſs of theſe Notions, with reſpect to what paſſes in our own Minds, we are not able to make true and diſtinct Judgments of the *unity* or *multiplicity* of things without us: For it does not follow, that what is repreſented to the Soul at once, under one *Idea* or Appearance, ſhould, according to the *reality of things*, be *one undivided nature*; neither can it be inferred, that what is repreſented to the Soul under *different Idea's* is ſo many *diſtinct real Beings*: For there are ſome *Idea's* purely of the Soul's own making, and not copied from any external Patterns; where there are a great many particular real Beings, of different kinds and natures, comprehended under one Repreſentation: Thus all the Hills, Plains, Rivers, Trees, and Towns, *&c.* which the Eye can reach from ſuch or ſuch a Point, we put into one Picture, and call it a *Landskip*, or Proſpect. Thus does the Soul enlarge its View to all the Works of God and Nature; it takes in the whole Creation at a Thought, and calls it *World*. On the other ſide, the *real Natures*, and *Eſſences of Things*, which are allowed to conſiſt in a *ſimple undivided Unity*, are not conceivable by us at *once*, but at *different Views*, by *different partial Conceptions*, which the Soul after-

afterwards compounds and calls by *one Name*. Thus when we endeavour to comprehend the Nature and Eſſence of what we call Man, we form, at different times, ſeveral confuſed Notions of *Subſtance*, *Body*, *Life*, *Senſe*, and *Reaſon*; every one of which is a *complicated Idea*, and to be reſolved into a great many others more ſimple and diſtinct: As for inſtance, I muſt form a great many *Idea's* of particular Actions, and the Modes, Differences, and Relations of them, before I can have any tolerable knowledge of what *Reaſon* is; and ſo for the reſt.

All therefore that we underſtand of the unity of things without us, is this: When we perceive any Object in a *continued Poſition*, bounded and fenced out from other things round about it, all within ſuch Terms and Limits we call *One*: And then again, obſerving a great many different Actions, produced in and by ſuch an Object, we judge all theſe Actions and Operations to proceed from one *Common Principle*, in ſome ſuch manner as Streams from a Fountain, or ſeveral Lines from the ſame Centre. And whatever we thus judge to be *One*, tho' a great many Thoughts and Conceptions go to the forming of ſuch a Judgment, we endeavour, as well as we can, to repreſent to our ſelves under *One Idea or Appearance*, tho' the Repreſentation be often very confuſed and indiſtinct. And

this we do, as ſuppoſing it wholly and uniformly conceivable at One ſingle View, were it not for the Imperfection of our Faculties: Which Suppoſition is not without good Ground; for this we have plain Experience for, that when any viſible Object is of ſuch a magnitude, or in ſuch a ſituation that the Eye cannot receive the whole Image of it at once, we take it in at different times, from different points of Sight; and yet for all this, we find no more Reaſon to doubt of the real Unity of ſuch an Object, than of any other, whoſe Image came into the Soul entire at one Act of Viſion; for we eaſily conceive there may be other Organs of Sight, which would receive the whole Object together: And from thence we conclude further, that there may be alſo ſome other Mind more perfect than ours, which perceives that as one ſimple *Idea* which we cannot apprehend, but by a union of ſeveral different Conceptions: From whence it follows, that the moſt perfect Mind, which is *God*, is the only true and proper Standard of all *Unity* and *Diſtinction*.

The Summ of all my Thoughts is this: What is meant by *one* or *more*, the *ſame* or *different Idea's* is better to be conceived by inward Reflexion, than can poſſibly be explained by Words.

Such an *Idea*, which is not diſtinguiſhable into different Appearances, I call a *ſimple Idea*.

When

When I have any Thought or Perception, which is reſolvable into ſeveral *Idea's*, I call this a *complex* or *compounded Notion*. And hence I term any Being *ſimple* or *compounded*, according as it is perceivable by ſome Mind, under one *ſimple Appearance*, or a *complex Idea*.

Whether *my Idea's* are agreeable to the *real Natures of Things*, or thoſe *original Patterns* in the Mind of God, I cannot certainly know; but when they are the *ſame*, and when they differ from one another, I plainly perceive, tho' I cannot always judge of the *Identity* or *Diſtinction* of Things, according as they are repreſented to my underſtanding, under the *ſame* or *different* Appearances: For here I ſhould be ſometimes miſtaken too, as 'tis plain I often muſt, if I judged of the *real unity* or *multiplicity* of Things by my own *Idea's*.

The Notions we have of the unity of Things without us, come the neareſt that can be imagin'd to our *Idea's* of *Point*, and *continued Extenſion*; one of which repreſents *ſimple* unity, the other *compounded*; the one we apply to what we call *Spiritual* Beings, the other to *Material*: For 'tis certain the Conception we have of Body, can never furniſh us with any *Idea* of *ſimple* Unity.

By a *Spirit* then we mean ſomething without extenſion, and conſequently indiviſible, capable of performing ſome ſuch kind of Actions, which do, in ſome manner or degree, re-

ſemble thoſe we are conſcious of: But what that is, from whence I ſuppoſe ſuch Actions to proceed, I have not the leaſt conception of; for all that I conceive, is only ſeveral *Idea's* of different particular Actions, which no more expreſs the *Idea* of that Principle from whence they ſpring, than the *Idea's* of ſeveral particular Lines expreſs the *Idea* of that Point they are drawn from.

All that we can perceive or imagine of *Corporeal Unity*, is nothing elſe but a Connexion or joint Poſition of ſeveral Bodies, which, according as it is *more or leſs perceivable*, according to the *ſimplicity* or *multiformity of the Figure* reſulting from it, and the *eaſineſs* or *difficulty of Separation*, makes ſeveral degrees of *Union*, which all receive the common Denomination of *Unity*.

Now as *Extenſion*, by reaſon of its *perpetual diviſibility*, cannot give us a true Notion of *ſimple Unity*, ſo neither can we have any diſtinct knowledge of *Union* or *Compoſition*, abſtracted from all Conſiderations of *Extenſion*. We do not underſtand how a Mind and Body are united, any otherwiſe than that we perceive ſuch and ſuch ſpiritual Actions produced within the Compaſs of ſuch a Body which we call *One*: Neither are we able to comprehend the Union or Separation of Two *ſpiritual Beings*, without conſidering them as in the ſame or different *Localites*; for we have not

diſtinct

diſtinct *Idea's* of any different *ſpiritual Natures*, nor, if we ſhould perceive a great many *Operations* of ſeveral *Spirits*, could we diſtinguiſh the ſeveral *individual Beings*, or *Principles*, they proceeded from: For who is there that, if all the Thoughts and Motions of the Souls of ſeveral Men were communicated to him, could tell which proceeded from which? Nay, we cannot tell what *difference of Actions* is ſufficient to determine the *different kinds of Principles* they proceeded from; neither can any *Co-operation*, or *Conſent of Actions*, make us conceive a *ſpiritual Union*, without conceiving the *ſame Term of Action too*. For ſuppoſe *two Souls* were ſo exactly framed alike, that they always thought and will'd the ſame Things at the ſame times, and were conſcious of each other's Thoughts and Actions, if they were put into *different Bodies*, 'tis plain we could not properly ſay they were *united* or *made one*: And again, ſuppoſing they were in the *ſame Body*, we could not poſſibly conceive them to be *two*, any otherwiſe than we knew them capable of a *ſeparate Exiſtence*; that is, if we examine our Thoughts honeſtly, of a ſeparate *Ubi*, in different Bodies, or elſewhere: Not that I think *local Preſence*, or *Determination*, is any way contained within the *Idea* of a *ſpiritual Being*, but it helps us to conceive it better, and diſcourſe more diſtinctly about it. And, if we obſerve it, there are ſeveral caſes where

where our *Conceptions* and *Judgments* must necessarily differ.

These then are all the kinds of *Unity* and *Distinction* I can possibly imagine; namely, in *Idea*, *Principle*, and *Position*. Whatever else is called Unity, is more properly termed *Agreement*; the very Notion of which implies a *distinction* in some of the fore-mentioned kinds.

Identity is nothing else but a repetition of *Unity*, as *Number* is of *Difference*, with the Judgment of the Understanding upon it.

What *Personal Unity* and *Distinction* are, will be easily understood by explaining the word *Person*, which signifies one of these two things either a *Particular Intelligent Being*, or an *Office*, *Character*, or some such *complex Notion applicable to such a Being*. In the first sense *one Man*, or *Angel*, is *one Person*, and *several Men* or *Angels*, are *several Persons*: In the second sense of the word there may be so many *Persons* as there are different Combinations of the Actions, Relations and Circumstances of Intelligent Beings.

And thus having given an Account of the meaning and signification of the Terms in which we are required to express our Faith, we are next to Examine, how far, and in what sense we can believe this Proposition, That *One and the same God is Three different Persons*.

Now

Now 'tis certain, that if thoſe before-ſpecified are all the Notions we are able to frame of *Unity* and *Diſtinction*, then God muſt be *One* and *Three* in ſome way or manner not conceivable by Human Underſtanding.

Firſt then, let us ſee how and in what manner God can be *One* and *Three*, according to thoſe Notions our Souls have framed of *Unity* and *Diſtinction*.

And here 'tis granted on all hands, that nothing can be *One* and *Three* in the *ſame manner* and *reſpect*: We cannot conceive a thing to be in One determinate Poſition or *Ubi*, and in Three ſeparate *Ubi's* all at once; We cannot conceive that One Principle or Nature ſhould be but One, and yet Three different Principles or Natures too; or that any Object ſhould be truly and adequately repreſented to any Mind or Underſtanding under One Idea, and truly and adequately repreſented under Three different Idea's. 'Tis impoſſible to believe any thing of this kind, becauſe it implies a plain Contradiction to the cleareſt and moſt certain knowledge we can have of Unity and Diſtinction; ſo that if *One* may be *Three* in the ſame reſpect 'tis *One*, then *One* and *Three* muſt ſtand for other Idea's than we conceive when we pronounce theſe words; and if ſo, they ought to have other names, and not be call'd *One* and *Three*.

Since therefore we cannot ſay, that God is One and Three in *the ſame reſpect*; in the next place

place let us Enquire, In *what different reſpects* this may be affirmed of him. Now, as to the *Unity* of God, this is eaſily believed and acknowledged, as being very agreeable to all our other Notions of the Deity. The chief difficulty lyes in aſſigning the *Diſtinction*: In attempting which, the beſt and cleareſt way of proceeding will be by going over the ſeveral kinds of Diſtinction before-mentioned.

I will begin with that of *Poſition*: And here 'tis plain at firſt ſight that we cannot poſſibly conceive God under any *difference of Poſition*; we cannot exclude Omnipotence from any imaginable point of ſpace: 'Tis the limited Powers and Faculties of created Beings which are the Foundation of all *Local Diſtinction:* And therefore when we endeavour to repreſent God to our thoughts in this manner, we conſider him as *Omnipreſent*; and I can no more conceive *Three Omnipreſents*, than I can conceive Three ſtrait Lines drawn between the ſame Points.

But though there can be but *One undivided Omnipreſence*, may there not be *Three Infinite* Beings *Co-equal* to one another, and *Commenſurate* to *One Infinite Space*? This is far above my Conception too: *Infinite* ſwallows up all my thoughts. Whatever Idea we apply this Term *Infinite* to, I think it impoſſible to apply it to another of the ſame Denomination: As for Example; If I apply it to Power, I cannot conſider

ſider it as applicable to more than One Infinite Power: For Infinite Power includes all the Poſſibilities of Action; ſo that to conceive more than One Infinite Power, would be to conceive more Power than is poſſible; which is a groſs and palpable Abſurdity. And therefore we cannot conceive *Three Infinite Beings diſtinct* from one another, any more than *Three Infinite Powers*, or *Three Infinite Spaces*, becauſe all *Diſtinction* implies ſome *Limitation*, and *Limitation* is a Contradiction to *Infinity*. We can indeed conceive Infinite Power, as in ſome manner bounded by Infinite Wiſdom, Juſtice, Mercy, or the like; but in no wiſe as limited by any other Power. We cannot therefore conceive one Infinite Being as bounded by another Infinite Being; for then we ſhould conceive one Infinite Power limited by another Power, and the like of all other Attributes, which are the ſame in both: For the Notion of an *Infinite* Being includes in it all the imaginable kinds of *Infinite Perfection*.

But if we ſay, there are *Three Infinite Beings*, and all the *Perfections* of each are *coincident*, what ground can we have for *ſuch a Diſtinction?* Not ſo much, to uſe the former Inſtance, as for that of three ſtrait Lines between the ſame Points; for there the different times of deſcribing the ſame Line may in ſome manner help us to form a confuſed Conception of different Lines: But 'tis not in the Power

Power of the Soul to repreſent to its ſelf *Three Eternal Beings* of *Coincident Perfections*. Here's nothing for the Imagination to lay hold of, no manner of ground to deceive our ſelves into a confuſed belief of ſuch a Diſtinction. And therefore I do not ſee how 'tis poſſible for us to believe there are *Three diſtinct Principles or Natures* all of *the ſame Infinite Perfections*, which together we call God.

And if there be but *One Omnipreſent, Infinitely Perfect Being*, how can he be truly and fully repreſented to any Mind under *Three different Idea's?* The Truth of an Idea conſiſts in its Agreement and Conformity to the Original it repreſents; And if ſo, how is't poſſible there ſhould be Three Idea's exactly and adequately conformable to the ſame Original, and yet different from one another? Either theſe Differences found in the Idea's are not in the real Pattern, and then the Repreſentation is falſe; or they are, and then the Unity of the Object is deſtroyed.

'Tis true indeed, we do often apply different Idea's to the ſame individual Object; but theſe are either *Partial and Inadequate Conceptions* of the *Nature and Eſſence* of it; or Expreſſive of ſomething *Acceſſory* and *Extrinſecal* to the Nature of the thing, ſuch as *Modes, Circumſtances*, and *Relations*.

Thoſe Partial Conceptions we frame of the Divine Nature are what we call the *Attributes* of

of God: Which, how different ſoever from one another in our thoughts, are all neceſſarily included in the ſimple Idea of God; and therefore cannot be the ground of ſuch a Diſtinction as we are now enquiring after. For when I ſay, that God is Holy, Wiſe, or Powerful, I only ſay that *explicitly and in part*, which I ſaid *implicitly and in full*, when I pronounced the Name of God; and the meaning of ſuch Propoſitions is no more but this, That a Holy, Wiſe, Powerful Being, of all other Infinite Perfections, is Holy, Wiſe, Powerful, *&c.* All which Perfections, though conſidered ſeparately under different Appearances by our imperfect Faculties, being really but one ſimple Idea, can be applyed to but one *Single Perſon* in the firſt ſenſe of the word *Perſon*, as it ſignifies a particular *Intelligent Being*, *Nature*, or *Principle*; and that for the Reaſons juſt now mentioned concerning the Conformity of Idea's with their Patterns.

From whence it follows, that according to the Notions we are capable of framing of *Unity* and *Diſtinction*, which I have particularly examined, with Reference to the Holy Trinity, all the *Perſonal Diſtinction* we can conceive in the Deity muſt be founded upon ſome Acceſſory Idea's Extrinſecal to the Divine Nature; a certain Combination of which Idea's makes up the Second Notion ſignified by the word *Perſon*.

And

And if we fairly and impartially Examine our own Thoughts upon this Subject, we ſhall find, that, when we name God the *Father*, we conceive the Idea of God ſo far as we are capable of conceiving it, as Acting ſo and ſo, under ſuch *Reſpects* and *Relations*; and when we name God *the Son*, we conceive nothing elſe but the ſame Idea of God over again under different Relations; and ſo likewiſe of the *Holy Ghoſt*.

But if this be all that is meant by *Trinity in Unity, Three Perſons, and One God*, where is that ſtupendous Myſtery ſo much reverenced and adored by ſome? What becomes of the great Difficulty and Obſcurity complained of by others? What is it that has puzzled the Underſtandings, and ſtaggered the Faith of ſo many Learned and Inquiſitive Men in all Ages ſince this Doctrine was firſt delivered? This is an invincible Prejudice againſt the Account now given, and indeed againſt any other Explication whatſoever that has nothing in it hard to be underſtood, or believed: For how can it be imagined that what has paſſed for a *Myſtery* theſe Sixteen Hundred Years, ſhould now at laſt be comprehended as plainly as a common ordinary Notion?

But if this Account of the *Trinity* be too eaſie, and falls far ſhort of thoſe High Expreſſions of Diſtinction found in Scripture (as I think it does) and no other grounded upon any Notions

tions our Souls have framed of *Unity* and *Diſtinction* can be true or conſiſtent (as I have before particularly proved) then it neceſſarily follows, that God muſt be *One and Three* in ſome way or manner not conceivable by Humane Underſtanding.

And what we are to believe in this caſe is the Subject of my next Enquiry; which I am perſwaded may very eaſily and quickly be reſolved: For if we are fully ſatisfied from Revelation, that theſe Terms, *One and Three*, may, and ought to be affirmed of God, but not in any ſenſe of the words we are *here in this preſent ſtate* capable of conceiving; And moreover, if it be true, as I have already ſhewn it is, that we can believe a thing no farther than we underſtand the Terms in which it is propoſed to us; 'tis plain from hence that all we can poſſibly believe in the matter of the Trinity is, That *One and the ſame God is Three* in ſome way or manner we are not able to comprehend. And if we are ſure we cannot comprehend what this Diſtinction is whereby God is *Three*, in vain do we look out for Terms to expreſs ſomething which we have no manner of Conception of. Whatever words we uſe, whether *Perſon*, *Hypoſtaſis*, or any other we can invent, or Languages furniſh us with, they all ſignifie the ſame thing; that is, ſome kind of Diſtinction we do not underſtand. And we may rack our Thoughts, tire

our Imaginations, and break all the Fibres of our Brain, and yet never be able to deliver our ſelves clearer.

All therefore that we can *know* of the Trinity by *Reaſon*, can amount to no more than an *Obſcure Confus'd Knowledge*, which we are forced to expreſs in *General* and *Abſtracted* Terms, becauſe we are ſure no other reach our thoughts, though theſe are not ſufficient to explain all we mean by them.

Nor is this to be wonder'd at, that we ſhould have confuſed Notions of things which no particular Idea's our Minds are furniſh'd with can render clearer to us: For if we conſider the Degrees and Limits of our Knowledge, and take a ſtrict Survey of our whole ſtock of Thoughts, we ſhall find there are very few things that we know fully and diſtinctly. Moſt of our Notions differ only as *more* or *leſs confuſed*, *more or leſs general*. There is a certain Scale of Knowledge, wherein every thing is ſo fitted and proportioned to our Faculties, that we cannot deſcend below ſuch a determinate pitch in our Conceptions or Explications of any Object propoſed to us.

As for inſtance; ſuppoſe a Blind Man has a deſire to know what Colour is; 'tis certain he can never form a true diſtinct Idea of it: but yet he is capable of a general confuſed Knowledge, which wants but one degree of Particularity to be clear and perfect Conception.

tion. He may know that Colour is not any *Subſtanse*, but ſome *Mode* or Determination which owes its Exiſtence and Support to ſome other Being; that it is not Extenſion, or any other Accident or Quality perceivable by any of the Senſes he enjoys: He may further be made to underſtand, that it is ſome kind of *Senſation*, produced by the impreſſion of other Bodies upon that part of a Man we call *the Eye*, which other Men perceive though he does not. Now 'tis plain that ſuch a Man knows a great deal of the Nature of Colour, more by far than any other Blind Man who has not made the ſame Enquiries and Reflexions about it; and ſo much as will ſecure him from having any other Idea impoſed upon him for that of Colour, which is ſo diſtinguiſhed and circumſtantiated to him, that, ſhould he now receive his ſight, he would preſently acknowledge the marks before deſcribed to him: And yet after all, it may be truly ſaid, while he continues blind, that he has no manner of Idea of Colour, becauſe he has no diſtinct Idea of that particular kind of Senſation to which his general Idea's are applyed: And therefore he can go no lower in his Explications of the Notion he has of Colour: For if he explains it by any Senſation which he receives from his other Senſes, the Idea's he has then in his Mind are indeed more particular and diſtinct, but the Judg-

ment he makes upon them muſt be utterly falſe; whereas before, his Knowledge was only general and confuſed, but yet true.

I have made choice of this plain, familiar Inſtance of Senſe, to ſhew the unreaſonableneſs of thoſe who in higher Speculations complain that the Terms brought to explain them are too *general and abſtracted*; and demand a further explication of what we cannot poſſibly know beyond ſuch a degree of Particularity, which the Terms already made uſe of do expreſs.

In vain therefore, and unjuſtly, are we urged to explain the *Doctrine of the Trinity* more particularly, when we have brought it down to the utmoſt Particularity we are capable of conceiving, and at the ſame time freely acknowledge, we don't know it ſo diſtinctly as 'tis capable of being known.

For then only is the Uſe of *general abſtracted* Terms to be condemned, either when the Subject we are upon will admit of a more particular and ſenſible Explication; or, if it will not, when by too much Refining and Abſtracting, we deceive our ſelves, and think ſome Terms we have found out make the Thing clear to us, tho' we have not really more diſtinct Conceptions of it than we had before, and at the ſame time theſe very Terms make it more obſcure and difficult to others. And this is what I remarked before as a Prejudice

to

to be avoided in an impartial Search after Truth.

But ſo long as we acknowledge our ſelves to have only a *general confuſed Notion* of the *Trinity*, or of ſuch a *Three-fold Diſtinction in the Godhead*, as is conſiſtent with the *Unity of the Divine Nature*, we may be allowed to explain this Notion in *general abſtracted Terms*; becauſe we lay no greater a Streſs upon the *Terms* than they will truly bear, and require only a *Faith* proportionate to our *Knowledge*; that is, a *general confuſed Faith*, which we expect a clearer and more diſtinct Revelation of hereafter.

And thus I have diſpatched the firſt Branch of my main Diſcourſe, wherein I propoſed to conſider how far 'twas *poſſible* for us to *believe* a *Trinity*.

I come now to my Second General Enquiry, *viz.* What it is the *Scripture requires* us to *believe* in this Matter? For a diſtinct Reſolution of which Queſtion, I ſhall obſerve the following Method:

Firſt, I ſhall barely and poſitively lay down the Doctrine of the Trinity, ſo far as I judge it expreſly contained in Scripture.

Secondly, I ſhall endeavour to prove the Truth of what I aſſert.

Thirdly, I ſhall conſider the particular Additional Explications that have or may be given of the Scripture-Account of this Article.

1. In ſpeaking to the Firſt, it muſt be allowed, that there is no ſuch Propoſition as this, That *One and the ſame God is Three different Perſons*; *formally*, and *in Terms*, to be found in the Sacred Writings either of the *Old* or *New Teſtament*: Neither is it pretended that there is any Word of the ſame Signification or Importance with the Word *Trinity*, uſed in Scripture, with relation to God. There is one Text indeed which plainly enough affirms, without the help of Inference or Deduction, that *God is Three and One*: But this being a diſputed Paſſage, and no where elſe repeated in the ſame or the like Terms, I ſhall not inſiſt upon it. Nor do I think ſuch a Trinity as we profeſs to believe, ſtands much in need of the Support of this Text; the Matter and Subject of our Faith in this Point being frequently, largely, and circumſtantially mentioned; and, as it appears to me, interwoven into the very Deſign of the Scriptures.

Now the Summ of all that the Scriptures *plainly* and *expreſly* teach concerning a *Trinity*, is this: That there is but *One only God*, the Author and Maker of All Things; but that *One God* ought to be acknowledged and adored by us, under thoſe *Three different Titles* or *Characters* of *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*. Which Terms, whatever they ſignifie, according to my Judgment, upon a fair and impar-

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tial Conſideration of all Circumſtances that can determine their Senſe, are evidently applied to God in many Places of Holy Writ; and conſequently are truly and properly applicable to him.

2. The Proof of which Aſſertion is the Second Thing I undertook.

But here I find my ſelf foreſtalled by the ſucceſsful Endeavours of a great many Learned Men, who have carefully and nicely examined every Text that can be brought, either for the Eſtabliſhment, or Confutation of the Doctrine of the Trinity. I ſhall not therefore trouble my Reader with a particular detail of all their Arguments; but only acquaint him truly and fairly what were the chief Motives which influenced and diſpoſed me to make ſuch a Judgment as I have, juſt before, declared.

Now the Reaſons which determined my Opinion in this Matter, were ſuch as freely offered themſelves upon an unprejudiced reading of Scripture, and conſidering the Deſign, Connexion, and Analogy of thoſe Writings: And I am apt to believe, if any Man elſe took the ſame Method, and conſidered Things together, and not only in looſe Texts and Paſſages, the firſt Reſult of his Thoughts would be the ſame, *viz.* That theſe Terms, *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, muſt all be ſo underſtood,

ſtood, as to include the ſame God in their Signification; and that any other Senſe or Explication of the Words, would be attended with greater Difficulties.

But, this being a Reflexion which is founded upon the Agreement and Coherence of all the Parts of Scripture, 'twould be a very improper and ineffectual Deſign to go about to confirm the Truth of it from ſome particular Paſſages. Omitting therefore all thoſe Texts, which are a great many, where any of theſe Terms, *Father, Son,* or *Holy Ghoſt*, appear to be directly affirmed of God, according to a fair Conſtruction of the Words, I ſhall only obſerve Two or Three Paſſages from the Hiſtory of our Saviour and his Goſpel, which, to my Apprehenſion, do as ſtrongly prove what I have advanced as the moſt formal Expreſſions, and are leſs liable to be perverted by the Criticiſms of Language.

The Firſt Obſervation I have to make, concerns the common Forms of *Baptiſm, Salutation,* and *Bleſſing*, uſed in ſeveral Places of the *New Teſtament.*

Now theſe are Matters no way controverted: That our Saviour commanded his Diſciples *to go and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.* That St. *Paul* makes uſe of ſuch Salutations as theſe: *The Lord be with you*; *The*

Grace

Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all; Grace be to you, and Peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: And particularly that he cloſes his Second Epiſtle to the *Corinthians* with this larger and fuller Bleſſing; *The Grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghoſt be with you all.* From whence I infer, that all theſe Terms, *Father, Son,* and *Holy Ghoſt*, ſignifie *God*; becauſe I cannot poſſibly conceive, 'tis agreeable to the Nature of the Chriſtian Religion, that the Miniſters of it ſhould *Teach, Baptize,* or *Bleſs* the People in any other Name but *God's.*

It cannot be imagined but the People muſt equally believe in thoſe, in whoſe Names they are *Baptized* or *Bleſs'd:* They muſt believe that thoſe, who are call'd upon to beſtow Graces and Bleſſings upon them, are able to give what they are called upon for. And whatever is meant by *Baptizing in the Name* of the *Father, Son,* and *Holy Ghoſt*, it ſeems very plain that theſe Three are all equally concerned in what's done in that Sacrament. Whether by this Form of Baptiſm be ſignified on the Miniſter's Part, the *Authority* or *Commiſſion* by which he acts in his Adminiſtration; or whether on the Part of the Perſon baptized, be meant any *Acknowledgment* or *Confeſſion, Submiſſion* or *Dedication* of himſelf; or whether this Phraſe *in the Name,* or, (according to the Greek)

Greek) *into the Name*, does imply all this, and more; the whole Force and Importance of the Expreſſion, does in the ſame Extent belong to *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*. The *Power* and *Authority* here received, is derived from all Three: They are all to be *acknowledged* as *Authors of our Salvation*; all *infallible*, and to be *believed* in what they Teach; have all the ſame Title to our *Submiſſion* and *Obedience*, and are Joint-Parties in that Covenant we make in Baptiſm.

The Inference from hence is very Plain and Eaſie: That if *any one* of theſe Terms ſignifie *God*, they muſt all Three ſignifie *God*, they muſt all Three ſignifie *one and the ſame God*; for *God* is but *One*. Now that the *One Supreme God*, the Lord and Maker of all Things, is here meant by the Word *Father*, is a Thing not queſtioned; and therefore *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, are Terms expreſſive of the ſame *Divine Nature*.

Should we but ſuppoſe the contrary, That by *Son* was meant only a *meer Man*, or ſome *Heavenly Being*, *of higheſt Rank under God*; and by *Holy Ghoſt* was ſignified only ſome *created Spirit*, *inferior* to the *Son*, or the *Power*, *Efficacy*, *Love*, *Favour*, or *Vertue* of *God*, how ſtrange would ſuch a Form of Baptiſm appear? *I Baptize thee in the Name of God, Peter the Apoſtle*, and the *Power* or *Love of God*; or, *I Baptize thee in the Name of God, Michael the Arch-*

Archangel, and *Raphael a Miniſtring Spirit*. There needs no more but a bare Mention of ſuch an Expoſition to ſhew the Falſhood of it: What abſurd Conſequences may be drawn from it, I ſhall leave to every Man's particular Reflexion.

Another Thing which mightily confirmed me in this Belief, that the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, ſo often named in Scripture, are *One and the ſame God*, under thoſe *Three different Appellations*, was this; That the *Son*, who is the ſame with him that is in other Places called *the Lord*, and *the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and ſometimes only *Jeſus*, or *Chriſt*, was *worſhip'd* with a *Religious Worſhip* by thoſe that followed him and embraced his Goſpel: For if He that was called the *Son of God*, or *Chriſt*, was thus to be worſhip'd, it plainly and evidently follows from hence, according to all the Notions we have of God and Religion, either from *Nature* or *Revelation*, that the *Son* was alſo *God*, the *ſame true and only God* with the *Father*.

And if the *Son* be allowed to be God as well as the *Father*, it will be eaſily admitted that the *Holy Ghoſt* is ſo too, who appears in Scripture inveſted with all the ſame Characters of *Divinity*: For *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, are as conſiſtent with the *Unity* of the *Godhead*, as *Father* and *Son* only; and beſides, there's greater difficulty in conceiving the *Son* to be *God*,

God, than the *Holy Ghoſt*, becauſe of his *Human Nature*. But that He was *God manifeſt in the Fleſh*, is, I ſay, apparent from the *divine Worſhip* that was pay'd to him: For that God only is to be worſhip'd, is an evident Principle, as well as an indiſpenſable Duty; and I can as ſoon believe a thing *to be*, and *not to be*, as that any thing that is *not God* ſhould be worſhipped as *God*.

Now that Chriſt received the Honour and Worſhip due to God only, is plain from abundance of Places of Scripture, where we find he was not only adored with all the outward *Expreſſions of Reverence* and *Devotion*, but confeſs'd and acknowledged to be God by an Application of the *Divine Attributes* to him, ſuch as agree only to God, and are incommunicable to any other, as might be proved at large if it had not been done already: But this being fully inſiſted upon by others, I ſhall only name Two Paſſages to this Purpoſe; the one, *Phil.* 4. 13. the other, *Acts* 7. 59. which, if there were no other, are of themſelves ſufficient to ſhew what the Faith of the firſt Chriſtians was: For who, but one that believed that *Chriſt* was *God*, could ſay with St. *Paul*, *I can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth me*; or, with St. *Stephen*, at the inſtant of Death, cry out, *Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit*.

From theſe, and many other Texts, it ſeems plain to me, that Chriſt was worſhipped, and acknow-

acknowledged as God; and that therefore he ought ſo to be worſhipped, and acknowledged, we have have all the ſame Reaſons to believe, as we have that the Scriptures are True; the Eſtabliſhment of a Falſe Worſhip being a Thorough Diſproof of the Authority that Commands it.

Suppoſing therefore the Truth of the Scriptures, there's no way of eluding this Argument, but by giving another Interpretation to all thoſe Places which ſeem to aſcribe Divine Honour to Chriſt; which can no otherwiſe be done, than by framing a particular Dialect for this Purpoſe, and giving new Significations to words, when applied to our *Saviour*, which they never had before, when uſed upon other Occaſions.

I ſhall not enter upon a particular Proof of this, but paſs on to

Another Argument I obſerv'd from Scripture, which gave me further Aſſurance of the *Divinity* of the *Son*, and conſequently of the Truth of the whole Propoſition before advanced; and that is, The Character of Jeſus Chriſt conſidered *meerly as a Man*. Now 'tis certain, that the *Man Chriſt Jeſus*, the *Son of David, according to the Fleſh*, is repreſented by all the Evangeliſts as having his Converſation in this World with all Lowlineſs, and Humility, and with perfect Holineſs, and Unblameableneſs of Life:

And

And it is not imaginable, that a Perſon of this Character ſhould have ſuffered any Titles to have been given him, any Honour or Reſpect to have been pay'd him, which were not ſtrictly and indiſpenſably due to him; much leſs have taken the Honour and Worſhip, peculiar to God only, to Himſelf, if he had not been infallibly conſcious that of a Truth *God dwelt in him*. I cannot poſſibly conceive, that one, who declined all Appearance of Grandeur, Dominion, and Authority, ſhould have allowed of any thing that look'd like Worſhip, or Adoration, or might have been miſtaken for it; or that He, who knew he was believed to be the Son of God, in ſuch a Senſe as ſome thought Blaſphemy, would not have undeceived his Followers, and juſtified himſelf to his Enemies, had he not really been what 'twas Blaſphemy to have pretended to be, if he were not.

I might eaſily purſue theſe Reflexions a great deal further, and bring more Arguments to confirm the truth of what I have aſſerted, that theſe Names or Titles of *Father Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt* are applyed in Scripture to the *One True God*; but I judge it altogether unneceſſary, not only becauſe it has been fully made out already in ſeverall ſet Diſcourſes upon this Subject, but becauſe it is ſo plainly and expreſly revealed, that I am verily perſwaded every Man that reads would believe, were it not

for

for the Additional Explications ſuch a Belief is charged with.

3. Which is the next thing to be conſidered: And indeed Here lyes the whole Difficulty of the matter, the main Streſs of the Controverſie. For that God ſhould be called *Father, Son,* and *Holy Ghoſt,* is as eaſily to be believed, as that he ſhould be called *Adonai, Elohim,* and *Jehovah*; That the ſame thing ſhould be ſignified and expreſſed by ſeveral names, is no ſuch incredible *Myſtery*: But if we allow that theſe Terms, *Father, Son,* and *Holy Ghoſt,* are all applyed to God in Scripture, 'tis not thought ſufficient to ſay, that theſe are three ſeveral Names which ſignifie God; but we are further required to believe that *God is One and Three, the ſame God, but three different Hypoſtaſes or Perſons*; And that *One of theſe Three Hypoſtaſes or Perſons, is both God and Man.* Theſe are the hard ſayings which puzzle ſome Mens Underſtandings, and make them chuſe rather to wreſt and pervert the plaineſt Texts, than admit ſuch ſeemingly inconſiſtent Conſequences.

Here therefore I ſhall Examine, what grounds there are in *Scripture* for ſuch an Expoſition:

And what we are obliged from thence to believe when we expreſs our Faith in this particular manner.

First

Firſt then, as to theſe forms of Expreſſion, That *God is One and Three*, &c. It is to be obſerved, that theſe Names, *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, are applyed to God in Scripture in a different way from what any of his other Names are: For the Other Names of God ſignifie only *Partial Conceptions* of the Divine Nature, ſuch as Self-Exiſtence, Power, *&c.* and are all contained within the ſame Idea of God; and ſo are indifferently uſed upon any occaſion to expreſs the whole Idea of God to which they belong, which is the ſame under every denomination. Theſe therefore cannot be the Foundation of any diſtinction in the Godhead: But *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, according to *our way of conceiving* things, ſignifie ſomething *Extrinſecal and Acceſſory* to the Divine Nature, as much as we know of the Divine Nature by *reaſon*; the whole Idea of God being conceived as full and compleat before the application of theſe Terms; And though all of them are ſeparately and together affirmed of God, yet each of them in ſo peculiar a manner, that there are ſeveral occaſions where when one of theſe terms is uſed with relation to God, 'twould be improper to uſe either of the other. From whence it follows, that theſe three Names of God, *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, muſt denote a *three-fold difference* and *diſtinction* belonging to *God*; but ſuch as is conſiſtent with the

the *Unity* and *Simplicity* of the *Divine Nature*. For each of theſe Names includes the whole Idea we have of God and ſomething more; ſo far as they expreſs the Nature of God, they all adequately and exactly ſignifie the ſame; 'tis the additional ſignification which makes all the diſtinction betwixt them.

What *particular kind* or *manner of diſtinction* this is, is not expreſſed in Scripture; but ſince the Church has thought fit to aſſign a Name for it, that of *Perſon* ſeems to me as proper and agreeable to the whole Tenor and Deſign of the Holy Writings, as any other that could have been choſen for their purpoſe. For *Father, Son,* and *Holy Ghoſt*, whether we conſider the Primitive ſenſe and intention of the words, the general and conſtant uſe of them, or the particular Connexion and Circumſtances in which they are mentioned in Scripture, have plainly a *Perſonal Signification*; each of them, without any figure of Speech, being determined to ſignifie *ſome intelligent Being* Acting in ſuch a manner as is there related.

There needs no Proof of this, the plain *diſtinction* of *Perſons* imported by thoſe Terms being the chief Argument made uſe of to ſhew that they cannot all be applied to God, but muſt neceſſarily ſignifie *Three diſtinct Beings*: But that they are all applied to God in Scripture, has been proved already; And therefore *Father, Son,* and *Holy Ghoſt* may be conſidered

as *Perſons* or *Perſonal Characters*, which do not imply any *diſtinction of Being* or *Nature*.

The Greeks are ſuppoſed to have meant the ſame by *Hypoſtaſis* as we do by *Perſon*, this word being ſometimes the very Tranſlation of the other; And if ſo, there's the ſame ground for the uſe of both: But if they meant any thing elſe, they could hardly have ſo good Warrant for it from Revelation.

Heb. 1. 3.

Now, that one of theſe *Perſons* or *Hypoſtaſes* ſhould be *both God and Man*, there is this Foundation in the Scriptures for. He who is there called the *Son of God*, did certainly appear in the *likeneſs of Men*, being in all reſpects, Sin only excepted, truly and properly *Man*; as his *Birth*, *Neceſſities*, *Sufferings*, and *Death* ſufficiently teſtifie. 'Tis certain alſo that the ſame *Jeſus Chriſt*, who was called the *Son of God*, and was made in *the likeneſs of Man*, is affirmed by St. *Paul*, Phil. iii. 7, 8. to have been in the *form of God*, when he took the *Nature* of *Man upon him*.

But beſides this and many other Texts to the ſame effect, 'tis plain, from what before has been proved, that God did ſuffer himſelf to be worſhipped and adored *in* and *by* the *Man Chriſt Jeſus*: The leaſt that can be inferred from which is, that God was more immediately and peculiarly *preſent in Chriſt*, than ever he is ſaid to have been any where elſe:

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As in the *Heavens*, *Jewiſh Temple*, *between the Cherubims*, in *Prophets* and *Holy Men*, who ſpake as they were moved by the Spirit of God. What created Object was ever allowed to intercept the Worſhip paid to God, or ſhare with him in it? Were the *Heavens*, the *Temple*, the *Cherubim* or *Prophets* to be adored? Nay, has not God taken a particular care to preſerve Men from Idolatry, by forbidding them to Worſhip him *in* or *by* any ſenſible Repreſentation? Did not the Apoſtles, who worſhip'd Chriſt, forbid others to Worſhip Men of like Paſſions with themſelves, *Acts* 14. 15. commanding them to direct all their Devotions to *the Living God, who made Heaven and Earth*? How then can we ſuppoſe that Chriſt was only a *meer Man*, or ſome other *Creature*, and not rather believe that he had the *Fulneſs of the Godhead* dwelling in him *bodily*?

But here it is Objected; How can *God* and *Man* be united? And to this I muſt fairly Anſwer, that I cannot tell. I have confeſſed already in the Account I have given of the Notions of *Unity* and *Diſtinction*, that I have not any juſt or diſtinct Conceptions of the *Union* of *Spiritual Beings*, either *with Bodies*, or with *one another*: But this I will venture to ſay, that I can as well conceive *God and Man* together *under one Idea*, at one view, as I can conceive a *Soul* and *Body* ſo united.

All that I know of the *Union of the Soul and Body* is; that there is ſome Intelligent Power that makes uſe of the Organs of my Body, and Acts in conjunction with the Motions there produced. And I may as well conſider *God* united to *Man*, when he ſo Acts by the Miniſtry and Operation of Man, that the Actions of God ſeem conveyed to us the ſame way as the Actions of one Man are to another. Had thoſe who upon ſome occaſions ſpake by the extraordinary Aſſiſtance of a Divine Power been conſtantly ſo directed, and aſſiſted, how could they have diſtinguiſhed the *Motions of their Souls* from the *Impreſſions of God?* And if they could not, why ſhould not we think ſuch an *Extraordinary Power* as this as much united to ſuch Men, as that *Common Ordinary Power* we call the *Soul* is to thoſe Bodies in which it acts and exerts it ſelf?

Some have been of Opinion, that what we call the *Soul*, is nothing elſe but a *conſtant regular Inſpiration*, or a determinate Concurrence of God Almighty with ſuch and ſuch Motions and Capacities of Matter: But whether this be ſo or no, as moſt probably it is not, it ſeems to me very plain from Scripture, that ſuch a Power that we aſcribe to God, did as *Conſtantly* and *Regularly* Act *in* and through *Chriſt*, as the Human Soul is perceived to do in any other Man: As appears from his abſo-

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lute ſecurity from all manner of Sin and Error, from his conſtant knowledge of the Thoughts and Deſigns of Men, and the Will and Decrees of God; and from his Readineſs and Ability to work Miracles at any time, and upon any occaſion. All which are manifeſt Tokens of an uninterrupted Preſence and Concurrence of the Deity: Eſpecially if we conſider the Calmneſs and Evenneſs of Spirit obſervable in our Saviour, entirely free from all the tranſports of over-ruling Impreſſions, 'tis a further Argument that he did not receive the Spirit of God *at times*, or *by meaſure*; but was as conſcious of all the Divine Perfections in himſelf as a Man is conſcious of his own Thoughts.

Such are the Grounds we find in Scripture for thoſe particular Explications of the Trinity before-mentioned.

In the next place, we are to Enquire what the Scriptures neceſſarily oblige us to believe in this Point.

But before this Queſtion can be reſolved, there are two things to be premiſed:

1. That whatever Articles of Faith are abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, all Perſons of every Rank and Condition are equally obliged to believe them. There is not one Religion for the Peaſant, and another for the Scholar:

We have the ſame general Rule to walk by, though particular Obligations may be greater or leſſer, fewer or more, according to different Circumſtances and Relations. And whatever Principles and Duties are of general Neceſſity, ought to be ſo plainly revealed, as to be eaſily underſtood by ordinary Capacities upon a fair and careful Examination.

2. That in order to this end it ſeems to have been the Deſign of the Scriptures to repreſent God in a *ſenſible manner*; though at the ſame time they take care to aſſure us that God is in his own Nature a Being of different Perfections not conceivable by Human Underſtanding; And is thus repreſented only in condeſcention to our weakneſs, for the help and aſſiſtance of our Devotion. So that all Expreſſions of this kind, where God is the Subject, are to be underſtood in a *higher* and *more Spiritual* ſenſe, but ſtill with ſome Analogy to what they *properly* and *uſually* ſignifie. Thus, to uſe a common Inſtance, when 'tis ſaid, that God *looks down* and *beholds* what's done among the Children of Men; that he *hears* the Cries of the Righteous, and the Blaſphemies of the Wicked, 'tis not to be imagined that he ſees as Man ſees, that he makes uſe of any Organs of Senſe; but 'tis thus expreſſed to give us more lively Notions and Impreſſions of the *certainty* of God's *Univerſal Knowledge*;

Knowledge; to assure us that God more *plainly*, *fully*, and *infallibly* knows whatever is done in all the Earth, than we are capable of knowing those things which fall within the reach of our Senses.

This being premised, it seems very plain to me that the Doctrine of the Trinity is not to be look'd upon as a nice abstracted Speculation designed for the Exercise of our Understandings; but as a plainer Revelation of God's Love and Good Will towards Men, and a greater Motive and Incitement to Piety than any we had before this Doctrine was delivered.

Had Man stood confirmed in his *Original Righteousness*, and there had been no need of *Redemption*, 'tis highly probable God had never been considered by Man in his *state of Probation* under any such Distinction as is now revealed to us; And therefore I should think those *different Titles* and *Relations* by which God has been pleased to express that *Eternal Distinction* in the *Godhead* to us, should be chiefly considered by us with reference to the great Work of Man's Salvation.

Thus far then the *Scriptures* require us to believe; That the *One only Supream God* upon his fore-knowledge of *Man's Fall*, did from all Eternity Purpose and Decree to *Redeem* Mankind into a capacity of Salvation, by the *Death* and constant *Mediation* of a *Man* chosen

and enabled for this Work by *the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelling* in him: And in conſideration of his *Paſſion* and *Interceſſion*, to impart ſuch *Gifts*, *Graces*, and *Spiritual Aſſiſtances*, as would be ſufficient to render this *Redemption* effectual to the *Saving* of much People.

And moreover we are to believe that God has accordingly executed this his Gracious Deſign toward us: *By* ſending into the World *Chriſt Jeſus*, the *Man* whom before he had ordained, that he ſhould in the Fulneſs of Time *be born*, and *ſuffer* for our Sins; *in* and *by* whom, as has already been ſhewn, God *acted* in a wonderful manner, was *worſhipped and adored*, and *acknowledged in* all his *Attributes*; and *with* whom he abideth in the Fulneſs of Power and Glory for ever: And, ſince his *Death* and Reception into Heaven, *by* a plentiful *Effuſion* of *Spiritual Graces and Influences*; by which means a great many have *embraced the Goſpel of Chriſt*, and become *Heirs of Salvation*, and more from henceforth to the end of all things ſhall daily be *added to the Church of God*, be *ſupported in the Faith*, and be made *Partakers of the purchaſed Inheritance* reſerved in Heaven for thoſe that are *Sanctified* by the *Spirit of God*.

Now, with reſpect to this great Deſign of Saving Mankind, and the Order and Method of the Divine Wiſdom in the Execution of it; To give us as full and diſtinct Apprehenſions

as

as our Souls are able to conceive of the Miſery of our Sinful Condition, the difficulty of Deliverance, and the unſpeakable Mercy of God in reſtoring us to the Happineſs we had juſtly forfeited; and to raiſe our Souls to the higheſt pitch of Veneration, Love, and Gratitude we are capable of expreſſing for ſuch an ineſtimable Bleſſing; God has been pleaſed to reveal himſelf to us under ſeveral *Perſonal Characters* and *Relations:* Such as *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*; *Saviour*, *Mediator*, and *Comforter*.

By which Names, and all other Expreſſions conſequent thereupon, we are directed to conſider ſome ſuch *kind of Diſtinction*, and *Subordination* of *Office* and *Relations* in God, as the Terms made uſe of do commonly import.

Thus when God is pleaſed to repreſent his Love to Mankind, in the higheſt Image of Nature; that of a Father ſacrificing an only well-beloved Son, the exact Tranſcript and Reſemblance of himſelf, perfectly Innocent, and Obedient to his Will in all Things, we are to believe that, by the *Sufferings and Death of Chriſt*, God has given greater Proofs of his Love towards us than any Man is capable of doing to another; and that ſuch an Action of an Earthly Parent ſuggeſts the neareſt and likeſt Conception we can poſſibly frame, of what our *Heavenly Father* has done for us; tho' at the ſame time we muſt acknowledge it comes infinitely ſhort of expreſſing the Riches and

and Fulneſs of his Mercy and Loving-kindneſs.

And the ſame Uſe and Spiritual Improvement is to be made of all other Revelations of this nature.

And thus we have ſeen how far we are capable of *conceiving* a Trinity, and what the *Scriptures expreſly oblige us to believe* concerning this Point.

All that is beyond, lies far out of our Reach and Comprehenſion, and no *particular Explications* can add any thing to our Faith; for the Terms made uſe of for that End, being in uſe before this Doctrine was taught, muſt either ſignifie the ſame they did before, or not: If the ſame, where's the Myſtery? If not, what do they ſignifie? Something that we cannot explain but in Words uſed already, and then the Queſtion will return again. The ſame Difficulty would attend new Terms invented on purpoſe; for either they would have no meaning at all affixed to them, or elſe they would be underſtood in the ſenſe of ſome other in uſe before. And therefore, had the very ſame Terms and Forms of Expreſſion been found in the *Scriptures*, as are now in our *Creeds*, the Revelation of the Trinity had been no plainer, nor we obliged to believe any farther than the preſent Language does import: For upon a fair and diſtinct Examination

nation both of *Scripture* and *Reaſon*, it plainly appears, that what's already revealed amounts to as much as we are capable of conceiving, and does beſides imply ſomething more which we cannot comprehend; and 'tis not in the Power of Language to make us underſtand any thing better: For 'tis utterly impoſſible to frame any Notions above our own Level. And ſhould God be pleaſed to ſtamp ſome new Idea's upon the Minds of Men, they could not be conveyed to others by the help of Words, or any other Signs, but only by the ſame Divine Impreſſions: ſo that whatever Idea's the Apoſtles, and Inſpired Writers, might have of a Trinity by *immediate Infuſion*, the Terms they have made uſe of can give us but this imperfect Diſcovery of them, that they were ſuch as we are not able to comprehend without the like Aſſiſtance.

This then is the utmoſt we are *required to believe*, or are *capable* of believing, concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity, *viz.* That theſe *Three different Terms*, *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, are all applied in Scripture to the *One only ſupreme God*; That all the *Actions*, *Offices*, and *Relations*, which are in Scripture aſcribed to any of theſe Names, (excepting thoſe proper to the *Human Nature* of Chriſt) are there plainly *attributed*, and do *truly belong to one and the ſame Divine Nature*; That there are ſuch

such frequent and evident Assertions of the *Unity of God* in Scripture, and yet such plain Expressions of *distinction*, signified by these Terms, *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, as imply a *consistency of unity and distinction in the* Godhead; That this Distinction, whatever it be, is *not the same* with that we conceive betwixt the Attributes of God, which are partial Conceptions of his Essence, not a *meer difference* of *Name*, *Office*, or *Relation*, such as is signified by the like Terms, when applied to Men, (tho' these are all the Differences we can *expresly conceive*, as applicable to the Divine Nature) but some *other Distinction*, which we have but a *confused perception of*, and cannot comprehend or explain by any particular Idea's; which *unknown inexplicable Distinction* is the Foundation of all these Differences *expresly conceived* by us.

And since the *Church* has thought fit, for the Sake of Unity and Peace, and for the Suppressing all Private Disputes and Interpretations, to appoint *set Forms* to express *this our Faith* in, I think the *Athanasian Creed* as rational an Explication of the *Trinity* as can well be made. The Worst that the Enemies of this Doctrine can say of it, is, That it is an unnecessary Multiplication of Terms, and too nice an Endeavour to Explain what cannot be explained but not that 'tis False, or Absurd; nothing being there asserted in any sense inconsistent

conſiſtent with the *Unity of God*, or the *Principles of Right Reaſon*: All ſuch Meanings and Significations of any Terms or Expreſſions in that Creed being very improper, as they are there applied, and utterly diſclaimed by the Church that enjoins the Uſe of it.

Nor can it be eſteemed an unreaſonable Impoſition, That we ſhould be obliged to profeſs our Faith of ſomething which cannot be *conceived*, but *confuſedly* and *indiſtinctly*; nor *expreſſed*, but in *general and obſcure Terms*. For where's the Hardſhip of being required to believe as far as we can believe? God is Incomprehenſible in his Nature and Perfections, but are we not obliged to believe there is a God who is Incomprehenſible? Are we not obliged to believe there are Joys in Heaven, which it has not enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive? And, to repeat a former Inſtance may not a Blind Man be obliged to believe what a Friend of unſuſpected Integrity tells him of the *general nature* of Colour, tho' he is not able to form a *particular Idea* of it? And, if theſe Things cannot be denied, What difference can be aſſigned why we ſhould not be under as great an Obligation of *believing* the Trinity, tho' we are not able to *conceive* it *diſtinctly*?

A *Threefold diſtinction* in the Godhead, conſiſtent with the *Unity* of God, is as plainly revealed in Scripture as any other Article of Faith: Nor are thoſe *general Abſtracted Terms*

we

we find in our Creeds, to be condemn'd as uſeleſs and perplexing Niceties; for tho' they are not ſufficient to make us *underſtand* the Trinity *fully* and *diſtinctly*, yet they are *proper Limitations* to exclude all the Falſe and Unworthy Apprehenſions of this Doctrine, which Pretenders to a more particular Explication might introduce.

III. And now what dangerous Conſequences can poſſibly attend ſuch a Faith as this? 'Tis true indeed the Adverſaries of the *Trinity* have drawn up a heavy Charge againſt this Doctrine, and taken a great deal of Liberty in their Diſcourſes about it: But the principal Objections that have been made by any of them are but Three, to which all the reſt may be reduced: And theſe I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, by the Account before given, are very Frivolous and Unjuſt.

1. The firſt Pernicious Conſequence the Doctrine of the *Trinity* ſtands charged with, is, the Introduction of a *Plurality of Gods*: But 'tis very plain from what we have ſaid in the former part of this Diſcourſe, that 'tis utterly impoſſible to believe a Trinity in any ſuch ſenſe as implies a Plurality of Gods: For according to the Notions I have there ſhewed we have of the Nature and Attributes of God, 'tis

'tis undeniably certain to every Man's Experience, that we cannot conceive more than *One* God: All our Endeavours to comprehend more are only repetitions of the ſame Idea.

Let Thoſe therefore take care to Anſwer this Accuſation, who, under pretence of giving a more Rational Account of what we are to believe in this Point, ſet up *created ſubordinate Gods* to be Partners with their Maker in the Glory and worſhip due to him.

Beſides, we do explicitly declare, that there is but *One God* at the ſame time we make Profeſſion of our Faith in a *Trinity*, and *Three Perſons*.

2. In the next place, therefore we are accuſed of believing *Contradictions*; and conſequently of deſtroying all the certainty of Natural Knowledge: Which Fence being down, there's no Error ſo groſs or abſurd but may be obtruded upon us: and *Tranſubſtantiation* has as good a Pretence to be an Article of our Faith as the *Trinity*. But I need not make any particular Anſwer to this Objection, having proved at large already, that we neither do nor can believe a Trinity in any ſenſe that contradicts the plain and evident Principles of Natural Reaſon. We do not believe there can be *more God than One*, that *One can be Three in the ſame reſpect 'tis One*; or that *One God can be Three in the ſame ſenſe three Men are Three Perſons*;

sons; or any other Proposition that's inconsistent with those Natural Notions which are the Foundation of all our other Knowledge. But the Patrons of *Transubstantiation* cannot make this plea, who in this one Particular deny those very Principles which upon all other occasions they rely upon with the greatest Assurance. Did they only affirm, that Christ was *present* in the Sacrament in some way or manner they could not comprehend, but in no way repugnant to the plain and necessary Dictates of well informed Sense, and right Reason, there might be then some Resemblance found betwixt this Doctrine and that of the Trinity; but at present the Comparison is palpably and and notoriously unjust.

3. But Thirdly, 'tis further Objected, That though the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, as we explain it, could not be proved to contain down-right Contradictions; yet at least it must be counted and esteemed as a *Mystery*, and the Imposition of *Mysteries* for Articles of Faith, is a thing of very ill Consequence.

In Answer to which Charge, it is to be observed, that as in the Doctrine of the Trinity, so in most other Objects of Faith and Knowledge, there's something that we plainly and certainly understand; and something that we cannot possibly comprehend: Thus a Man by inward Reflection is Infallibly conscious of his

his own Thoughts, and he judges, whatever he perceives within himſelf, to proceed from one *Common Principle*, which he calls his *Soul*; and which, from the Nature of its Operations, he is fully perſwaded is *ſomething of a different kind* from his Body, tho' it always Acts in conſent with it: But *what this Soul is*, or in *what manner united to his Body*, he is not able to conceive; and therefore the *Doctrine of the Human Soul*, taken all together, may as juſtly be ſtiled a *Myſtery*, as the Trinity. We ought not then to be offended at the word *Myſtery*; ſince, if we ſtrictly examine our thoughts, we ſhall find that almoſt every thing we pretend to know, comes under that name, even thoſe things we have the greateſt Aſſurance of, our very *Souls* and *Beings*.

This being obſerved, we may conſider *the Trinity* either with reſpect to what may be underſtood of it, or what cannot: So far as we are *capable of conceiving a Trinity*, 'tis *no Myſtery*, and conſequently no Oppreſſion of our Faith; And ſo far as it *cannot be comprehended*, it does not bind us to any *Explicit Act of Faith*: As is plain from what has been ſaid before concerning the *Nature of Faith*, and the *Perſons obliged to believe* this Article: For all things neceſſary to Salvation are to be believed by all ſorts of *Men*; and nothing can be believed any farther than the terms in which it is propoſed are underſtood: But a Myſtery cannot be

brought down to the loweſt Capacities, and be delivered in Terms that are plainly and diſtinctly underſtood, for then it would be no longer a *Myſtery*: So far therefore as we are *obliged Explicitly to believe*, is *no Myſtery*; For whatever Terms I am bid to believe a thing in I cannot comprehend, I can mean no more but that I believe it to be in ſome manner I cannot comprehend: And I am ſure there's no difficulty or danger in believing that there are ſome things which we are not able to find out, or comprehend.

Theſe are the Reflections which offered themſelves upon a careful and impartial Conſideration of this Subject.

But here I fore ſee it may be asked, What do we underſtand more of the Trinity now than we did before? What new Hypotheſis is here advanced to ſolve all the Difficulties of that Doctrine by? In Anſwer to which Objection, I have this further to add for the Juſtification of the foregoing Diſcourſe.

Firſt, That the Principal Deſign of my Enquiries was, to know, what God required us all to believe in order to our Salvation, not how far the Soul of Man was capable of diſcovering the deep things of God: For I am fully perſwaded, that there may be things neceſſary to be believed, and yet we not obliged to believe

lieve them in that *distinct particular sense* in which some Learned Men have explained them; Though their Hypothesis should be very Rational and Consistent, and perhaps really True. And therefore could there be any new way found out of making the *Trinity* conceivable by Human Understanding, I do not think we should be under any Obligation of believing that particular Exposition of it: For besides the difficulty of such abstracted Notions, even in their plainest dress, with respect to mean Capacities, which are all equally concerned in necessary Articles of Faith, it cannot be imagined that we should be obliged to believe more than the Christians who lived before us were; that more should be necessary to our Salvation than was to theirs: And 'tis certain, their Faith was sufficient and effectual for obtaining Eternal Life, who could not possibly believe what we suppose to be lately discovered.

But 2*dly*, Considering that we are permitted with Humility and Reverence to Exercise our Souls in the search of Divine Knowledge; And moreover that we ought as Christians, as well as Men, to give a Reason of the Faith we profess, and defend it against all false and unjust Imputations; I have also made it my business to enquire how far we are capable of forming distinct Conceptions of a *Trinity*: And upon Enquiry found that after a

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Faithful Tryal of our Faculties, and a ſtrict Examination of all the *ſimple* Notions which make up the Propoſition to be believed, we cannot arrive at greater Knowledge in this Point than our fore-fathers have done: And that ſo much of the Doctrine of the Trinity as was a *Myſtery* to them, is like to be ſo to the end of the World.

Which if I have as fully and ſufficiently proved to others as I am convinced of it my ſelf, I ſhall not think my Time or Labour loſt upon this Subject. For next to underſtanding a thing throughly, is to know we cannot underſtand it; next to reſolving a Problem in Mathematicks, is to demonſtrate it cannot be done. Our Souls are as much at reſt, our Deſires as quiet, and all our Deſigns and Purſuits as much at an end, when we deſpair of Victory, as when we actually Conquer.

And therefore if theſe be the *true and proper Limits* of our *Faith* and *Knowledge* which I have aſſigned; if I have given a Juſt Account of what we are *required to believe* concerning the Trinity; How much 'tis *poſſible* for us *to believe* of it, and how far we are capable of having *diſtinct Conceptions* about it; 'tis in vain to ſearch for new Notions and Hypotheſes, which may probably puzzle or deceive our Underſtanding, but can never lead us farther into the Knowledge of the Trinity.

But

But I will not pretend to meaſure the Abilities of other Men by my own: I ſhall only ſay this more, which I am ſure I can truly affirm, that I have taken all the care imaginable to deliver *my Judgment impartially* and *ſincerely*; and have not dared to *impoſe* any thing upon *others*, which I do not *believe my ſelf*, or is any ways inconſiſtent with the Principles of right Reaſon.

POST-SCRIPT.

Theſe Papers were in the Preſs, and every Word in the Book, and Preface, as they ſtand now, was Written before His Majeſty's Injunctions *came forth: The Author is glad to find that he has not tranſgreſs'd 'em; the Authority and Reaſonableneſs of which he pays ſuch Submiſſion to, that if he had not preſcribed to himſelf the ſame Rules in Writing, that he now ſees enjoyned by his Superiours, he wou'd have ſhewn his Obedience to 'em, by Suppreſſing what he had written.*

FINIS

ERRATA.

PAGE 27. line 4. read *in some way or manner there laid down, or else in some other way or manner not* —— p. 49. l. 14. for *their* r. *that*. p. 32. l. 4. from the bottom, for *that* r. *as*. p. 57. l. 15. for *Office* r. *Offices*. p. 63. l. 13. for *and* r. *or*. Ib. l. 3. from the bottom, for *God* r. *Gods*.

A

DEFENCE

Of Some

CONSIDERATIONS

Concerning the

TRINITY,

AND

The Ways of Managing that

Controverſie,

Againſt the

OBJECTIONS

OF THE

Dean of St. *Pauls.*

LONDON:
Printed for *Tho. Bennet*, at the *Half-Moon* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard. 1698.

A DEFENCE OF Some Conſiderations Concerning the TRINITY, &c.

Againſt the OBJECTIONS of Dr. *Sherlock*, Dean of St. *Pauls*.

IN a late Diſcourſe intitled, *The Preſent State of the* Socinian *Controverſie*, &c. the Dean of St. *Pauls* has thought fit to ſpend a whole Chapter upon *ſome Conſiderations* that had been publiſhed long before upon the Subject of the *Trinity*. And I cannot but account it ſome kind of Honour to me, that, when he had good reaſon to be

weary of his Conteſts with greater Men, he ſhould condeſcend to take ſo much pains with the *Conſiderer*: But the more honour there is in being Attackt, the more care and concern is there requir'd in Defending; and therefore I hope, I may, without juſt cenſure, be allowed to Anſwer a heavy Charge brought againſt me, whatever Name or Character the Perſon bears that brings it; eſpecially ſince I promiſe to be as ſhort as I can, to put the whole Cauſe upon this Iſſue, and not to trouble the World with any further Replies or Rejoinders.

p. 52. 'Tis in the Second Chapter of his Book that the Dean *examines* the *Conſiderations*: and in his firſt entrance upon the Work, he is pleaſed to paſs a great Complement upon the Author for his *Temper* and *Civility*; but I found upon reading the whole Chapter through, that his Kindneſs was like an *Embrace* before *drawing*; only the Ceremony was not performed with ſo much Honour as the Men of the Sword generally obſerve: For they ſeldom uſe theſe little previous Civilities to one another but when they are reſolved to Fight fair; but I cannot ſay I have met with all that *Civil Uſage* from the Dean which his Complement gave me reaſon to expect, and his poſitive Promiſe aſſured me of. If I had, both his Chapter, and my Anſwer to it, had been much ſhorter; and I ſhould have had

no

no occaſion to trouble my Readers with the following Heads; which, as the Caſe now ſtands, is the beſt Method I could contrive for their eaſe in reading, who are not ſo far diſguſted againſt that tedious way of writing, Anſwerers are obliged to, but they will have the curioſity to look into theſe Papers.

In the Firſt place then I ſhall give a general Account of the Dean's *Civil Uſage* and Treatment of me.

Secondly, I ſhall defend my ſelf from the Charge of *Sabellianiſm.*

Thirdly, I ſhall endeavour to Vindicate the *Deſign* of the *Conſiderations*, and ſhew what Grounds I had for not inſiſting upon *Tradition* and the Authority of the *Fathers.*

Fourthly, I ſhall humbly offer ſome Reaſons why I think the Dean's way of Managing the Controverſie about the *Trinity* is not the moſt Expedient.

I. And Firſt, as to Dr. *Sherlock*'s Uſage of me; if it ſhall plainly appear that he does highly miſrepreſent me; that he all along finds fault when there is no occaſion; and that he oftentimes finds fault with me for the ſame things he is pleaſed to own himſelf: If he puts the worſt and moſt invidious Conſtruction upon every thing I ſay, and inſinuates worſe things

than he is able to wreſt from my words; If he picks out Paſſages to except againſt, and takes no notice of others that directly overthrow his Exceptions; And laſtly, if he accuſes me of *Hereſie*, and a great many other heinous Matters, without any foundation for his Charge but what's of his own laying: If, I ſay, it can be made very evident that theſe things are ſo; it will not, I hope, be counted rudeneſs in me if I do not return the Complement the Doctor gave me, and commend *his Temper* and *Civil way* of *finding Fault*.

Now that the Dean has uſed the *Conſiderer* in this manner, does not, I think, need any long proof: Whoever will be at the pains to read over the *Conſiderations* again, I am confident will make all thoſe Reflections upon his way of *examining* them, which I had rather any body elſe ſhould make than my ſelf.

But, becauſe it is not reaſonable to expect that others ſhould be concerned to do me Juſtice, when I have not that ſenſe of my being injured as to put them in mind of it; I think my ſelf obliged to repreſent the Uſage I have met with in a few Inſtances, and then leave it to my Readers to examine them by the Characters before laid down.

Preſ. State p. 52. The firſt thing the Dean takes occaſion to find fault with me for in the *Conſiderations*, is my ſaying *The uncertainty of*

of our Faith in these Points; which he interprets to be spoken concerning the *Trinity*, as if I had affirmed that the Christian Faith concerning the Trinity which was *revealed in the Gospel* and confirmed *by the universal Tradition of the Catholick Church* for *Sixteen hundred years* was *Uncertain:* Whereas it is evident from the words immediately foregoing those that he quotes, that the *Points* in which I said our Faith is *Uncertain*, were the *several Modes and Ways of Explaining the common undivided Nature and Essence of the Trinity, and the different Offices and Operations of each Person.* Now, if I am not very much prejudiced in my own Cause, I cannot but think that the *Doctrine of the Trinity*, and the *Ways and Modes of Explaining the Trinity*, are very *different Points*; and, if I remember right, the Dean has several times in his Book considered them as such, and very justly made it a Matter of great importance to distinguish carefully betwixt them. Something very like it I am sure he says in this very Paragraph, where he would have me mean otherwise; for he tells us, *It concerns Good men* to *distinguish the Catholick Faith from the Disputes about Ecclesiastical words, and the Catholick sense of them*, that so the *Faith* may be *secure.* How came it to pass then that the Dean could not distinguish *these Points* in the *Considerations?* This I believe cannot easily be accounted for any

Consid. p. 1.

other way, than by what he lays down upon another occaſion, that tho' he *allows himſelf* to uſe ſuch Diſtinctions as theſe, he will not *allow this to the Conſiderer.*

The next reſolution the Dean took to be offended at me, ſprung from a diſlike I ſhew'd to thoſe who are for *Receiving the Myſtery of the Trinity without looking into it at all,* and for believing what is propoſed to them as an Article of Religion with an *implicit Faith:* And indeed I cannot help thinking, that what he objects to me here proceeded from a reſolution of finding Matter againſt me, rather than from any juſt occaſion given him, as will eaſily appear to any one that duly conſiders his Remarks upon this Paſſage.

p. 52.

The firſt Reaſon he gives for his being Offended with me was, That *he believed I could not name any ſuch whoſe avowed Principle this of an implicit Faith is.* But, I *believe* I could, and it muſt be allowed me, that I had more reaſon to know whether I could or not, than he had: However, if I did not expreſly know of any body *whoſe avowed Principle this was,* yet if I had ever heard of *any ſuch,* or if it was very likely there might be *ſome,* whether I had heard of them or no, it will ſufficiently juſtifie what I ſaid, who had no deſign of marking out any particular Perſons, but only of ſhewing the inexpediency of ſuch a Principle in relation to the Controverſie of the Trinity, whoever it was maintained by.

But,

But, that there are ſome certain Chriſtians who do openly *avow* this Opinion which I declared againſt, the Dean aſſures us in the next words to thoſe I quoted before, which are theſe; That *an implicit Faith is only Meritorious in the Church of* Rome; And I was not ſo ignorant as not to have heard that this was a *Popiſh Doctrine* before: For the Papiſts, who make uſe of this way to guard all their unſcriptural and abſurd Tenets, and ſome weak and unwary Proteſtants, who, by imitating them in this Method with reſpect to the Myſtery of the Trinity, afford the general Principle too much countenance, were the only Perſons I deſigned my Reflection ſhould reach.

Why is it then that I am blamed by the Dean for expreſſing my *diſlike* of an *implicit Faith*, and of thoſe who profeſs and recommend it to us? Is it becauſe there are none of this *odd ſort of Faith*, as he ſeems to intimate by his telling me I cannot *name any ſuch*, and ſo my concern about it was impertinent? 'Tis plain he cannot mean thus, becauſe he lodges this Principle among the Papiſts. And if the Papiſts are the *only* Perſons who believe thus abſurdly *they know not what nor why*, as he affirms, what reaſon has he to extend my Reflection any further? Why ſhould he ſay juſt afterwards, that thoſe Expreſſions I uſe concerning *ſome* who profeſs ſuch a Faith as this, are

P. 52.

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p. 52. *very ſevere and ſcandalous Reflections upon ſome of the Wiſeſt and Greateſt Men among us.* 'Tis certain the Dean does not think *the Wiſeſt and Greateſt Men among us* Papiſts; and I am ſure ſuch Proteſtants as do in any Inſtance take up with their implicit Faith, do much leſs deſerve thoſe Characters. Who they were he gueſs'd me in this place to have aim'd at, I cannot in the leaſt imagine; nor can I find out any reaſon why he ſhould tax me now for cloſe premeditated deſigns of Scandal, when he ſeems to be of opinion juſt before, that I had thrown out a general Character at random, without knowing who it belong'd to.

But to make it appear more fully that I did not do well to Condemn thoſe *who are for Receiving the Myſtery of the Trinity without ever looking into it all*; he acquaints us that the *Proteſtant Divines* do *look into this Myſtery as far as they can, till Revelation bounds their Proſpect*, and *their People are taught to do ſo too. This*, he ſays, *is not to Reverence the Myſtery without looking into it all, but to look into it as far as God would have us, and as far as is neceſſary to all the Purpoſes of Religion, that is as far as the knowledge of this Myſtery is of any uſe to us.* And

p. 54. *when this is done, there are a great many wiſe Men who think they ought to look into this Myſtery no farther; and there ſeems to be a very good reaſon for it, becauſe with all our looking we can ſee no further.*

Now

Now the buſineſs of my Book being to prove, that we ought to *look into the Myſtery of the Trinity* thus far and *no further*, I thought it very proper and agreeable to my Deſign, to ſhew my *diſlike* of thoſe who were not for *looking into it at all*; and of ſuch as were for prying into it too far. The generality of Proteſtants are not, I thank God, blameable upon either of theſe accounts, eſpecially *the Wiſeſt* and *Greateſt among them*. But ſtill I think that *ſome* are, and whatever the Dean has ſaid upon the ſame Head, has only ſhew'd that he was extreamly diſpoſed to find Fault, when he had no other Grounds to go upon than what I have now mentioned.

This is of it ſelf ſufficient to ſatisfie any indifferent Man what a ſevere Examiner the Dean is like to prove: But how hard a thing it is for me to expreſs my ſelf in ſuch a manner as to eſcape his Cenſure, will, if that be poſſible, appear more plainly from the following Inſtance than the former.

In the *Conſiderations* I aſſert, that 'tis *impoſſible to believe what implies a contradiction to our former Knowledge; ſuch Knowledge I mean as is accompanied with Certainty and Evidence.* Now I took this to be as ſafe a Propoſition to aſſert, as any was within the whole compaſs of our Thoughts; and I did not only find my ſelf very well aſſured of it, but I was ſtrongly perſuaded I had moſt of

Conſid. p. 14.

of the Learned World of my opinion in this matter. But Dr. *Sherlock* ſays *this Propoſition is falſe*; and therefore *as Self-evident as I think it*, I muſt never offer to maintain ſuch a Paradox again. Had he made uſe of his Authority only againſt me, I ſhould, I confeſs, have been a little unwilling to part with my Propoſition; But 'tis in vain I ſee to ſtand by it, after the Reaſon he gives for its being Falſe; For as he truly affirms, it muſt be owned that *we* do *believe* and *know that there really are ſuch things* as *Heat and Cold, White and Black, &c. whoſe Natures are directly oppoſite and contrary to one another.* 'Tis true indeed, I am not yet perfectly ſatisfied of the Dean's new Philoſophy, That there are many *Ideas* which *contradict* one another, without being made to do ſo in a Propoſition; That *Contrarieties* and *Contradictions* are the ſame; That there are any other *Contradictions* beſides Logical ones; or, That the ſingle *Idea* of *White*, by the help of *is and is not*, does not produce a better *Contradiction* than *Black and White* together are able to do; Theſe, I muſt needs ſay, are new Truths to me, and ſuch as I never before met with: but I am ſo ſenſible of the Force of them, that if they ſhould all hold good, 'tis impoſſible that my *Self-evident Propoſition* ſhould ſtand before them: but I had much rather they ſhould not;

Pref. State p. 83

for

for then I could Anſwer the *Challenge* he makes me much better, and *ſhew him*, that there is not *any appearance* at all of *Contradictions in the Doctrine of the Trinity*; and that what *we know of God* and this Myſtery, *is not a direct Contradiction to all* or any *of the Ideas we have of Creatures*, as he thinks fit to ſay it is, by way of Anſwer to my Propoſition, that *it is impoſſible to believe what implies a Contradiction.* But if he can't diſprove my Propoſition without making Contradictions in the Trinity, and I have occaſion for it to ſhew there are none, I think I may venture to keep my Propoſition ſtill. *Pref. State* p. 83. p. 84.

Juſt ſuch another Philoſophical Quarrel as this, the Dean has with me about my Notions of Unity: He wonders mightily why I ſhould *reduce all my Notions of Unity* to theſe *Three Heads*; *Unity of Idea, Principle and Poſition*; *Why I take no notice of that old received Diſtinction of One*, that *unum eſt indiviſum in ſe*; and why *among all my natural Ideas I ſhould not find this Notion of Unity, which is the only natural Notion of the Divine Unity, and belongs to no other Being:* But to clear up his Wonder, and to give him as ſatisfactory an Account of my Conduct in this Matter as I can; I do aſſure him, that I take that *Notion of Unity* he likes ſo very well, to be a good *old definition of One*; and becauſe p. 91.

I was willing it ſhould continue as it always was, the *definition of Unity in General*, when I was reckoning up the ſeveral *kinds* and *ſorts* of Unity, I had no mind to make that one of them, for fear they ſhould, by that means, have all wanted ſome common Definition to agree in, which might, by confounding the Old Diſtinction of *Genus* and *Species*, have produced a further Innovation in *our Logicks*.

Several other Cavils and Objections of the like Nature and Force, my *Words* and *Notions* have been the innocent Occaſions of: But I am not much concerned either for my *Language* or *Philoſophy*, if my *Faith* be but ſound and well grounded; and therefore I ſhall leave them to the Reader's Mercy, and conſider what *Creed* the Dean has drawn up for me. And here I find by the *opening of the Sabellian Scene*, that his *Civility* begins to thicken upon me, for his repreſentation of my Faith is this: That the *Conſiderer expreſly owns, that there is but One who is God, but One Divine Perſon as well as One Divine Nature*; and that I *endeavour to prove, that the Catholick Faith aſſerted and defended by the Church againſt* Sabellius, *is abſolutely impoſſible*.

p. 88.

ibid.

The Vindication of my ſelf from this Charge belongs to another Head: All that I have to ſay to it here is, that I am not juſtly repreſented; and this will manifeſtly appear from the Arguments

guments the Dean brings to juſtifie his Narrative.

Now for the Proof of this Point, that I *expreſly maintain, that there is but One Divine Perſon*, he urges what I ſay, That God can be but *One ſingle Perſon* in the *firſt ſenſe of the word Perſon, as it ſignifies a particular intelligent Being, Nature, or Principle*; From whence it muſt be inferred, that I ſay, God can be but *One ſingle Perſon* in any other ſenſe of the word, tho' I endeavour to prove the contrary: But not to inſiſt upon this Inference, which is manifeſtly falſe; I am willing to allow his Argument to be good, That I do abſolutely maintain, that God is *but one ſingle Perſon*, whatever I may ſay or pretend to the contrary, if that Senſe of the word *Perſon* I here mention be properly applicable to *Father, Son* and *Holy Ghoſt*, and there is no other *Orthodox* Notion of Perſon but this: But I have great reaſon to think it cannot be ſo, from the Dean's own Account of this Matter: For he expreſly tells us, That *the Divine Perſons are not diſtinguiſhed by any difference of Nature, or of Principle*; *One and the ſame undivided Nature and Principle being and acting in Three*; *but by Perſonal Differences*; as, *that the Father is unbegotten, the Son begotten, and the Holy Ghoſt proceeds from Father and Son.* 'Tis improper, he ſays in another place, *to*

Conſid. p.

p. 95.

p. 96.

p. 97.

p 200.

call

call the Divine Perſons Individuals, becauſe they have not three individual Divine Natures; and
p. 253. *we muſt not form ſuch a Notion of Three Perſons as of Three Men.* From all which I humbly conceive, I have good reaſon to conclude, That the *Three Perſons in the Godhead* are not *Three particular* or *individual intelligent Beings, Natures,* or *Principles*; nor are *Three Perſons* as *Three Men* are *Three Perſons*; which was the thing I undertook to ſhew in the *Conſiderations.*

This is the main Argument the Dean makes uſe of, to ſhew, that I do certainly *own* and *endeavour to prove, that God is but one ſingle Perſon*; and the Reader will ſee the Force of it more clearly, if he will turn back to the 84th. *page* of his Book; for there he will find him taking me to Task for ſaying that *One and the ſame God is Three Perſons*; which *Propoſition,*
p. 85. he affirms, to be *in the moſt obvious Senſe of theſe words, manifeſt Hereſie*; and he is mightily *afraid was intended ſo by the Conſiderer.* From whence it evidently follows, that I muſt needs *endeavour to prove the Catholick Faith* concerning a *Trinity impoſſible,*
p. 88. by maintaining, that *God is but One ſingle Perſon*; becauſe I am guilty of *manifeſt*
p. 85. *Hereſie,* in affirming, that *God is Three Perſons.*

But to bring off this ſeeming Contradiction, the Dean will make me ſay, there are *Three Perſons*

Perſons in the Godhead in another ſenſe of the word *Perſon* I mention, as it ſignifies an *Office, Character*, or *ſome ſuch Complex Notion applicable to an intelligent Being*; and that this is all *the Perſonal Diſtinction* I allow in God; tho' I do expreſly prove, that the word *Perſon*, when applied to *Father, Son* and *Holy Ghoſt*, is improperly uſed in this Senſe, and *falls ſhort of the Diſtinction ſignified by thoſe terms in Scripture:* And he brings me in *dealing* ſo *plainly* in the Caſe, as to call them *Figurative Perſons*, tho' I never heard of the Expreſſion before, and do not underſtand it now. As for any other Diſtinction of *Hypoſtaſes* or *Perſons* beſides that of *Names, External Offices*, and *Relations*, (which I ſuppoſe are his Figurative Perſons) he ſays *I abſolutely Reject it*; and the Reaſon he gives for it is, becauſe I will not allow that that *Threefold Difference or Diſtinction* which belongs to God, can be any other, *but ſuch as is conſiſtent with the Unity and Simplicity of the Divine Nature.*

p. 83. *Conſid.* p. 26. *Conſid.* p. 32. p. 112. p. 116.

But I hope this Reaſon does not hold, becauſe then there will be no avoiding *Sabellianiſm* without falling into *Tritheiſm*; For if there be not *ſuch a Threefold Diſtinction belonging to God as is conſiſtent with the Unity of the Divine Nature*, it neceſſarily follows from hence, that, if there be any *Diſtinction of Divine Perſons* at all, there muſt be *Three Gods.*

I do not ſay that Dr. *Sherlock* means to lead us into *Tritheiſm*, by the ſtrange Arguments he brings to prove me a *Sabellian*; 'tis plain from another thing he objects to me concerning the Diſtinction of Perſons in the Godhead that he does not. For, tho' I do plainly aſſert in the *Conſiderations*, That *Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt are Three Perſons*, and, as he has here proved, I do affirm, they are *Three Perſons in ſuch a Senſe as is conſiſtent with the Unity of the Divine Nature*; yet in another place of his Book he blames me for *having no regard to the different Notions of Nature and Perſons*; and for *taking no notice of that Old Catholick Diſtinction, that God is One in Nature and Three in Perſons.* 'Tis certain then from hence, that the Dean does himſelf believe, that *God is One in Nature and Three in Perſons*, in the Catholick Senſe of thoſe Notions, and conſequently that *there is ſuch a Diſtinction belonging to God, as is conſiſtent with the Unity of the Divine Nature*; For otherwiſe he would not have been ſo overmuch concerned for this Diſtinction of *Nature* and *Perſon*, as to blame me for taking no notice of it, without conſidering that I had inſiſted upon it.

p. 92.

But, as willing as I am to put the beſt Conſtruction I can upon the Dean's Principles, I cannot poſſibly entertain ſo favourable Thoughts of his way of Treating me; For, beſides that I plainly own, *God is One in Nature and Three*

on

in Perſons; and therefore there was no occaſion at all to tax me with a Neglect of that *Catholick Diſtinction*; I cannot but think that he lays more ſtreſs upon the Uſe of *theſe different Notions of Nature and Perſon* than he had leave from his own Principles to do; only that I might appear more blameable for my ſuppoſed *no regard* to them: And the Reaſon of my thinking ſo is, becauſe in another Chapter of his Book, when he is got a great way off of this place, he freely confeſſes, that *he is not ſatisfied of that abſolute neceſſity which ſome pretend of ſtating Nicely and Philoſophically this Diſtinction between Nature and Perſon in order to underſtand the Doctrine of the Trinity:* For he is of opinion, that *Men who underſtand little of this Diſtinction, may believe very Orthodoxly in Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt without it.* Whether *theſe are very ſevere and ſcandalous Reflections upon ſome of the Wiſeſt and Greateſt Men among us*; as *ſome* of thoſe who *pretend* there is ſuch a *neceſſity of diſtinguiſhing* rightly *between Nature* and *Perſon* are: and whether the *Reflections* are not ſuch as Dr. *Sherlock had little Reaſon for*, I ſhall not take upon me to ſay. But this I am ſure of, That, if I had not made uſe of that *Diſtinction* of *Nature* and *Perſon*, as I manifeſtly have, and had not lookt upon it to be a very *good*, very *old*, and very *neceſſary* Diſtinction, as I really do, yet the Dean had no reaſon to

p. 337.

p. 338.

bring my *Faith* into queſtion upon that Pretence; ſince, by his own *Confeſſion*, a Man *may believe very Orthodoxly without it.*

The Dean having given ſuch an Account of what he calls the *Conſiderers Way*, and *expreſs Doctrine*, as to make him believe a *Trinity in One ſingle Perſon*, diſtinguiſhed only by *three Names* or *Perſonal Characters*; he does, agreeably to the *way of Repreſenters*, introduce him as believing only *an Inſpired Man* for a *God Incarnate*. And this new Article exhibited againſt me, is juſt as well founded as the other: For, after I had proved from *Scripture* that *Chriſt was God, one and the ſame God with the Father*, from the *ſame Divine Worſhip* being pay'd him; from all the *ſame Characters* of *God* being attributed to him; and from his being joined with the *Father* in the *ſame terms* of *Baptiſm, Salutation* and *Bleſſing*: And, after I had proved that he was both *God and Man* by *the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelling in him Bodily*, he comes and charges me with denying the *Divinity of our Saviour*, only becauſe I cannot explain how *God and Man are united*; tho' at the ſame time *I venture to ſay, that I can conceive God and Man United, as well as I can conceive Body and Soul United*; which, I think, expreſſes as ſtrong a belief of this Point as Words can declare.

p. 119.

Conſid. p. 51.

But

But if all this is not ſufficient to convince him that I do believe *Chriſt was God*, I am ſure this Expreſſion of mine ought to have done it; that *Chriſt was as conſcious of all the Divine Perfections in himſelf, as a Man is conſcious of his own Thoughts.* For, as he himſelf truly argues from hence, *this was impoſſible without being true and perfect God in his own Perſon.* p. 53. p. 118.

If I have no where in the Conſiderations uſed theſe terms *Incarnate* and *Incarnation*; I do aſſure him it was for no other Reaſon but becauſe they did not offer themſelves to me before thoſe I did uſe: For I make no ſcruple at all of expreſſing my ſelf in any Terms ſo well eſtabliſhed as theſe are; Tho' I do freely acknowledge, that I am extreamly cautious with regard to any other Words that have not the ſame Authority and determined Signification as theſe have. But the want of theſe Terms ſhall be a great Crime in me, and a certain Argument of my not believing that *God was made Fleſh*, tho' I declared my Faith of the Article in never ſo many other Terms, that were as full and expreſſive as theſe, and by the generality of Chriſtians better underſtood.

Such is the *Civil Uſage* I have *met with* from the Dean throughout his whole Examination of my Book; as would be very eaſie to ſhew, by a particular Anſwer to every thing

he Cavils at, if I miſtruſted my own Cauſe or my Readers Judgment ſo much, as not to think there is enough ſaid already to ſatisfie any body who is concerned to know the truth of this Matter, that Dr. *Sherlock* has very widely and unreaſonably Miſrepreſented me. Any Man that will be at the trouble of *examining* the *Conſiderations* after the Dean, will himſelf ſupply my Anſwer to all the other Paſſages he has cenſured: For he muſt needs perceive, upon reading that little Diſcourſe through, that the Dean was ſome way or other diſpoſed to ſuſpect me of *Sabellianiſm*, and that afterwards he interpreted every thing I ſaid according to his own Suſpicions; that he taxes me with Opinions that I ſet up only in order to Confute; and that he condemns me for not believing a thing before I come to the proper place I propoſed to conſider it in.

This I think is very eaſily perceivable, and is what I have more than ordinary Reaſon to complain of; becauſe the Dean uſes all other Accounts of the Trinity more Favourably than mine; tho' in all appearance as far removed from the *only True one, his own.*

As for Example; He does in ſeveral places of his Book, and particularly *Chap.* 4. p. 188. *Sect.* 8. endeavour to bring off the *Schoolmen* for calling the *Three Perſons* in the *Godhead, Relations*, and *Properties.*

Sect.

Sect. 9. of the ſame Chapter, he Vindicates the *Fathers* for *diſtinguiſhing* the *Three Divine Perſons* by *different Characters*, and *Modes of Subſiſtence*, which they *call* τρόπους ὑπάρξεως, and *is the only Diſtinction*, as he there acknowledges, *which the Catholick Fathers allow between the Three Divine Perſons.* p. 362.

Further in the ſame *Section*, all ſuch Expreſſions as imply that the *Father is God in a more excellent and eminent Senſe than the Son or Holy Ghoſt*; or that the *Father alone (ſtrictly ſpeaking) is a Being abſolutely Perfect*, he judges are *inconvenient ways of ſpeaking, and liable to great Cavils and Miſconſtructions:* But, notwithſtanding this, he is willing to allow *they may be expounded to a very Catholick Senſe*; tho' an *abſolute perfect God*, and a *God that wants any Perfection*, he thinks, *ſounds not only like two Gods, but like Gods of different kinds. All that is meant* by ſuch Expreſſions as theſe, he grants is *certainly True* and *Catholick*; and conſequently that a *Trinity* which *ſounds like Three Gods of different kinds*, may have a *Catholick Meaning* under it. p. 372. p. 373.

Afterwards he helps out the *Schoolmen* again, by ſhewing us in what *Senſe ſome of them thought it very Orthodox to ſay THREE GODS*, if we took care to *explain* what *we meant* by it. p. 384.

And indeed, he is particularly kind to the *Schoolmen*; for, beſides this, and the Inſtance before mentioned, he is at a great deal of pains to ſhew in the Seventh Chapter, *That tho' the Schools have changed the Ancient Catholick Language, by teaching, that the Divine Eſſence is One in Number and Singular; whereas the Catholick Fathers denied that God was One in Number, but only in Nature; yet they meant the very ſame thing, and their Philoſophy about Singularity and Number was the ſame.*

p. 250, &c.

If therefore by the Dean's Favour and *ſpecial Allowance, Three Relations, Three Properties, Three Characters, Three Modes of Subſiſtence*, and *THREE GODS*, may have a *True and Orthodox Signification given them*, and *teaching Unity of Number* may be reconciled to a *denial of Unity of Number*; I muſt take the liberty to ſay, it was ſomewhat unkind in the Dean, not to find out ſome *Orthodox Senſe* to *explain* my Words in too; eſpecially ſince I have made uſe of no ſuch obnoxious Terms as moſt of thoſe he has pleaſed to defend are.

But ſuppoſe I had with the *Noëtians* and *Sabellians, turned the Three Divine Perſons into Three Names or Three parts of One Perſon* (as I never did any thing like it) yet ſince this, by his own confeſſion, *has much more Senſe in it than Three Modes*, and *Three Modes* are *capable of an Orthodox Expoſition*, as he himſelf has proved, I might reaſonably have

p. 72, 73.

have expected to escape better than I do, if the Dean had been inclined to shew me any Favour.

Nay further, had I made *Father, Son* and *Holy Ghost* only *Figurative Persons* (which the Dean very unjustly charges me with) yet since he owns there is *some Sense* p. 22. in which *we may allow Father and Son to be Metaphorical Names*, I cannot but fancy, if he had heartily intended *Civility*, he could have found out *some Sense* or other in which *Figurative Persons* might be *allowed* too.

But when I never thought that *Father, Son* and *Holy Ghost* were any thing like *Three Parts*; when I positively maintain and endeavour to prove, that they are more than *Three Names* or *Three Modes* (as *Modes* signifie the *Modes of One Person*, and not *Three Persons*, in the *Catholick Sense* of τρόποι p. 73. ὑπάρξεως;) and when I firmly believe them to be Three *Proper*, and not Three *Figurative Persons*; why might not I have been brought off as well as others, and had some fair and *Orthodox Meaning* put on my Words by a Man that had shewn so much Candor upon the like Occasions?

What the Reason of this different Conduct was, does not yet appear; but so it is, that the Dean has Treated me after a very particular manner; and has found out such *Meanings, Senses* and *Significations* for my Words, as can

never be reconcil'd to the *Catholick Rules of Expounding Language.* But bare Miſrepreſentation might eaſily have been ſet right, or neglected, if he had not taken occaſion from hence to accuſe me, as he does, either in Expreſs Terms, or by plain Inſinuations, of *Hereſie, Sophiſtry,* and *diſhoneſt Dealing*; *denying Myſteries, preferring Reaſon to Scripture, want of due regard to the Fathers.*

This indeed is a very terrible Accuſation; but having ſhewed already that his Evidences don't agree; that they don't prove what they were brought for, if they held together; and that there is great appearance of Pique and Reſentment in the Proſecution; my Defence of my ſelf will be eaſie and lie in a narrow room.

II. In the next place then I ſhall Defend my ſelf from the Charge of *Sabellianiſm.*

And if I can acquit my ſelf well upon this Head, I ſhall fully Anſwer the Dean's Three firſt Articles of *Hereſie, Sophiſtry,* and *diſhoneſt Dealings.* For, tho' *Socinianiſm* be ſometimes

p. 81, 122, &c. inſinuated to blacken the Accuſation, I am at other times ſo ſo-

p. 56, 104, &c. lemnly purged from that Guilt, that upon the whole Matter I can find nothing of *Hereſie* cleave to me but *Sabellianiſm*; And therefore, if I can clear my ſelf

ſelf wholly of this Imputation, I muſt be allowed to have meant as well as ſpoken *Orthodoxly*, and conſequently to have *dealt Honeſtly*, and to have uſed no Art or *Sophiſtry* in my Expreſſion.

Now in order to overthrow his Charge of *Sabellianiſm*, I muſt ſuit my Defence to his way of drawing it up; and ſhew Firſt, that *I my ſelf* am not *guilty of the Sabellian Hereſie*, and Secondly, that *my Words* are not. p. 86.

That I am not a *Sabellian* I prove from the Account he gives us of the Opinions of *Noëtus* and *Sabellius* concerning the *Trinity*: For they, as he tells us, affirm, that p. 70. *Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt are but Three Names of the ſame Perſon; who is ſometimes called the Father, at other times the Son or the Holy Ghoſt, with reſpect to his different Appearances or Operations: Or they made the Son and Holy Ghoſt not Two Perſons, but Two Perſonal Attributes in God, his Wiſdom or Power: Or they made the Trinity but Three parts of one compounded God, as a Man conſiſts of Body, Soul and Spirit.* But all theſe Opinions I *reject* and *condemn*; and look upon as *Hereſies* juſtly *rejected* and *condemned* by the *Catholick Church*; and therefore, if this be a true and full Repreſentation of *Sabellianiſm*, as no doubt it muſt, I am as ſure I am no *Sabellian* as I am ſure I know my own Thoughts.

And

And further, I am not only ſure of this now, but I had the ſame Notions of the *Trinity*, and the ſame aſſurance of my Faith when I writ the *Conſiderations:* And, as far as I know any thing of the Force and Propriety of the Engliſh Tongue, I think I have expreſſed my ſelf as fully There as Here.

For what can be more plain than what I aſſert in my *Preface* to that Diſcourſe, that a *pure Nominal Diſtinction ſeems to me utterly irreconcilable to the Language and Deſign of Scripture?* And agreeably to this, I do not only ſay, but endeavour to prove in the Book, that the *Three Perſons in the Godhead* are not *Three* in that Senſe only of the word *Perſon* in which it is taken for an *Office, Character, Relation,* or *ſuch like complex Notion applicable to an Intelligent Being*; becauſe ſuch an Account of the *Trinity* as this, *falls far ſhort of thoſe high Expreſſions of Diſtinction found in Scripture*; and becauſe *the Trinity* would then be no *Myſtery*, as Chriſtians have always thought, and I undertook to ſhew it to be.

Conſid. p. 32.

But, not to multiply Quotations of this kind, when one is ſufficient; I will take leave to Tranſcribe that Account I give of the *Doctrine of the Trinity*, when I come to ſumm up my whole Opinion together which I had been proving before by Parts; and which the Dean had not *Patience* to read before he finiſhed his Examination of my Book. 'This

'This then is the utmoſt we are 'required to believe, or are *capable of* 'believing concerning the *Trinity*: Conſid. p. 59, 60.
'*viz.* That theſe *Three different Terms*, *Father*, 'Son, and *Holy Ghoſt*, are all applied in Scrip-'ture to the *One only Supreme God*; that all 'the *Actions*, *Offices*, and *Relations* which are 'in Scripture aſcribed to any of theſe Names '(excepting thoſe proper to the *Human Nature* 'of Chriſt) are there plainly *attributed* and *do* 'truly belong to *one and the ſame Divine Nature*; 'That there are ſuch frequent and evident 'Aſſertions of the *Unity of God* in Scripture, 'and yet ſuch plain Expreſſions of *Diſtinction* 'ſignified by theſe Terms *Father*, *Son* and 'Holy Ghoſt, as imply a *Conſiſtency of Unity* 'and *Diſtinction* in the *Godhead*: That this 'Diſtinction, wherever it be, is not the *ſame* 'with that we conceive betwixt the *Attri-'butes* of God, which are Partial Concep-'tions of his Eſſence, nor a *meer Difference* 'of *Name*, *Office*, or *Relation*, (tho' theſe are 'all the Differences we can *expreſly conceive* as 'applicable to the Divine Nature) but ſome 'other *Diſtinction* which we have but a *confu-'ſed Perception of*, and cannot comprehend or 'explain by any particular Ideas; which *un-'known inexplicable Diſtinction* is the Foundati-'on of all thoſe Differences *expreſly conceivable* 'by us.

Which

Which *unknown Diſtinction* is ſaid before to have been an *Eternal Diſtinction in the Godhead*, and to be very fitly and properly expreſs'd by the Church, by the word *Perſon*; as I do likewiſe in the ſame page affirm, That the *Name of each Perſon does include the whole Idea of God in it.*

p. 55. p 49.

And immediately after this ſummary Account of my Faith which I have now repeated, I declare it my Opinion, That the *Athanaſian Creed is as Rational an Explication of the Trinity as can well be made.*

From all which I think it neceſſarily follows, that I do not make the *Three Perſons in the Godhead only Three Names or Three Parts*, or *the Son and Holy Ghoſt only Two Perſonal Attributes*, as the *Sabellians* did; and therefore *my Words* cannot *be guilty of Sabellianiſm:* or if they ſhould be thought ſo ſtill, the *Athanaſian Creed* may be proved to be as *compleat and artificial a Scheme of Sabellianiſm* as the *Conſiderations.* Which is a Task that ought to be undertaken by one who is reſolv'd to find *Sabellianiſm* in every Account of the Trinity, where he can't find Three Infinite Minds; for fear all *Sabellians*, when they are cloſely purſu'd, ſhould fly to this Creed, and *find* ſuch *a ſafe Retreat* there, as I in vain ſought for in *an Obſcure and Confus'd Knowledge.*

p. 101.

But

But however I am driven from that Strong-hold, and however uncapable I may be rendred of defending any *particular Paſſages* and *Expreſſions* in the *Conſiderations*, I am ſtill perſuaded it may be made very manifeſt that 'tis no *Sabellian* Account of a Trinity I have given there, from the *whole Deſign* of the Book, and the *ſeveral Proofs* inſiſted upon in it. For what need was there of diſtinguiſhing betwixt *General abſtracted*, and *Particular determinate Conceptions?* betwixt what we are *able to conceive, and what we are required to believe* of the Trinity? What occaſion had I to prove that there are no Words or Expreſſions whatſoever, that can contribute any thing towards *Explaining* our Faith in this Doctrine? And to what purpoſe ſhould I take pains to Vindicate what we believe from the Objections of *Myſtery* and *Contradiction*, by ſhewing, that we ought to believe *Myſteries*, and that there is no Contradiction implyed in our Faith? To what End and Purpoſe, I ſay, was all this, if I took the *Three Perſons in the Godhead* to be nothing elſe but *Three Names, Characters*, or *Relations* of *One God*; which is ſuch an eaſie conceivable Notion, as I was ſure every body underſtood, and was liable to none of thoſe Difficulties I was labouring to remove? This would have been a very abſurd ridiculous Enterprize if it had been done, and as hard to be accounted for, as the Dean's Sagacity now is in finding out what was ſo very unlikely to be intended. Thus

Thus have I freed *my Words* as well as *my Self* from the *guilt* of any *Sabellian* Meaning, as far as I am a capable Judge of what was meant by them; But, becauſe I may be ſuſpected of Partiality in the Caſe, I appeal to the Judgment of all that ever read the *Conſiderations*, whether there be any *Sabellian Notions, Scenes*, or *Concluſions* in them: And I think I may ſafely put my Cauſe upon their Verdict, becauſe I was ſo long a concealed Author as to have the opportunity of knowing what Opinion a great many Perſons of Character had of that Diſcourſe; and ſeveral of them were ſuch, whoſe skill in the Controverſie of the Trinity, and zeal for the Doctrine and Catholick Expoſition of it, muſt be allowed by the Dean as well as the reſt of the World; and I do ſolemnly proteſt to him, that, till he tax'd me with *Sabellianiſm* in a former Pamphlet, I never heard of any Perſon whatſoever that laid any ſuch thing to my Charge. And I can hardly perſuade my ſelf the Dean was the moſt unprejudiced Reader of the *Conſiderations* of any that ever gave themſelves the trouble of looking into them; nay, he muſt excuſe me if I believe he *Examined* the Book with a ſtrong tincture of Prejudice againſt it, and gave a haſty Sentence for want of *Patience to proceed any further* in the Cauſe than

Diſtinct. between Re. and Nom. Trin. Ex. p. 22.

Preſ. Stat. p. 123.

than he was willing to have it go; and 'tis the *civileſt* thing I can believe, becauſe I ſhould be tempted to have a very ſtrange Opinion of any Man's Judgment that thought ſo contrary to every body elſe in ſuch a plain Matter as this is, without ſome ſecret Byaſs to incline him to be Singular.

But allowing the Dean's Prejudices to run never ſo high, 'twas a little too ſevere, methinks, to paſs a peremptory Cenſure upon me for *Hereſie*, becauſe he knew there lay no appeal from his Sentence, tho' every body elſe were willing to acquit me of it: Had ſome Univerſity made a *Decree* againſt me, I might have got that eaſily revers'd by a contrary *Judgment* of a Doctor of greater Authority; But when Dr. *Sherlock* affirms, *'Tis Hereſie not to ſay Three Infinite Minds and Spirits*, all the Fathers of the Catholick Church cannot ſecure me for adhering ſtill to this ancient Form of *Three Perſons*. But I muſt bear my Misfortune as well as I can, and, ſince this is the only way of Defence I have left me; I will proceed to examine the remaining parts of his Charge againſt me. *Vindic.* p. 65.

III. Thirdly, I ſhall endeavour to Vindicate the Deſign of the *Conſiderations*, and ſhew what Reaſon I had for not inſiſting upon *Tradition* and the Authority of the *Fathers*.

Now the Deſign of the *Conſiderations* was in ſhort this: To Prove the *Doctrine of the Trinity*

nity in ſuch a manner as I thought might equally ſecure the True *Catholick Faith* againſt the falſe Opinions of all ſorts of *Hereticks* that oppoſe it, and the improper Expoſitions of all ſuch as undertake to *Explain* it.

In order to this end, I judged it the beſt Method to conſult *Scripture* firſt, and from thence, in Anſwer to the *Socinians* and *Arians*, to ſhew, that *the Son* and *Holy Ghoſt* are *truly God*, the *ſame God* with the *Father*, by all the Characters of the One only God being there applyed to them; And from the ſeveral Marks and Expreſſions of Diſtinction found in the *Language of Scripture* to prove againſt the *Sabellians*, that *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Ghoſt* are not *meer Names*, or ſignifie only different *Offices*, *Relations*, *Attributes*, or *Parts* of the Deity, but ſome *Eternal Diſtinction* different from all theſe: But the manner of God's being *Three* being no where determined in *Holy Writ*, nor any other Terms beſides thoſe of *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Ghoſt*, made uſe of there to ſignifie it, I thought it proper, againſt all pretenders to plain and *intelligible Explications* of this Wonderful *Diſtinction* in the *Divine Nature*, to evince from *Reaſon*, that it is not conceivable by Human Underſtanding in this Life, nor expreſſible by any Language we have or can invent; It ſeem'd alſo to me very expedient that it ſhould in the *ſame manner* be made to appear, that there can be no *Abſurdity* or *Contradiction*

tradiction in the *Catholick Faith of the Trinity*, as expreſſed by *our Church*; that ſo, theſe Objections being remov'd, I might effectually urge againſt thoſe that blame us for requiring the belief of a *Myſtery*, that 'tis very agreeable to our *Reaſon*, to believe what's as plainly *revealed by God*, as this Doctrine is, notwithſtanding we are not able to comprehend it.

This was the End I propos'd to my ſelf in the *Conſiderations*, and theſe were the Means I lookt upon as the likelieſt to effect it; tho I have caſt my Thoughts into another Method in Writing than what I ranged them in before I writ; becauſe I did not believe the ſame way I took to ſatisfie my ſelf ſo proper for the conviction of others: For I never had ſeen any Argument that gave me occaſion to diſtruſt the *Catholick Opinion*, but only I thought my ſelf oblig'd to be ſo *impartial* (whatever diſlike the Dean may have to *impartiality*) as to examine carefully, whether I had good reaſon to believe what I had hitherto believed, without ſuch ſtrict Examination; and this being my caſe, I was at liberty to follow the natural courſe of my Subject, in *conſidering for my ſelf*: But the different Prejudices of thoſe that had embrac'd contrary Opinions, and the appearances of Truth and Reaſon they were founded upon, requir'd a different method of Application in any one that undertook to encoun- p. 57.

ter them; and a Man could not ſearch this Point throughly, without perceiving what it was that other People chiefly ſtuck at; and therefore the *Conſiderations* were contrived in ſuch a manner, as appear'd, at the time when they were writ, the moſt proper to make the Belief of the Trinity eaſie to *others*, by removing all the principal Difficulties ſuppoſed to obſtruct it, by thoſe that either denied or doubted of that Doctrine, or were perplexed in their Faith about it.

The Reaſons why I did not inſiſt upon *Tradition*, and the Authority of the *Fathers*, were theſe:

Firſt. I did not imagine, that if a thing was well proved any one way, there could be much real need of a further Proof. Though *Scripture* and *Authority* are *two agreeing Witneſſes*, as the Dean calls them, yet I could not apprehend, that when *one Witneſs* was acknowledged ſufficient to prove the Point, the Cauſe could ſuffer by not calling in a *ſecond*. There's nothing ſo common in the Controverſies of Religion, as for different Men, according to their different Talents and Studies, to take different Methods of oppoſing or defending the ſame Doctrine; and I never before heard it objected to any of them, that he did not fight his Adverſary at all Weapons. The *Doctrine* of *Tranſubſtantiation* has been proved by ſome

ſome to be abſurd and falſe, from Principles of *Senſe* and *Reaſon* only: others have expoſed the Falſhood of it, by Arguments taken purely from *Scripture*; and the ſame Opinion has been ſhewn to be erroneous and Heretical, from the concurrent Teſtimony of the *Catholick Fathers*, without the former helps. And why may not the ſame Method be uſed in *defence of the Trinity*, as is allowed in the *confutation of the corporal Preſence?* eſpecially ſince the Adverſaries of the *Trinity* have blaſphemouſly loaded this Doctrine with the ſame Abſurdities as *Tranſubſtantiation* is juſtly chargable with.

But beſides that *Scripture* and *Reaſon* together are ſufficient to make good the *Doctrine of the Trinity* againſt all that oppoſe it, there are a great many we have to deal with upon this Subject, that will not be argued with upon any other Heads. For the *Socinians* (as the Dean rightly obſerves of them) *reject the Doctrine of the Fathers, and the Catholick Tradition of the Faith from the Apoſtolick Age, and yet appeal to Scripture and natural Sentiments:* and how could theſe Men be apply'd to more properly, than by ſhewing that *Scripture* and *natural Sentiments* are againſt them? Some there are (as particularly, the Author of the *Anſwer to Dr.* Bull's *Judgment of the Fathers*) who pretend that *Tradition* is of the ſide of the *Arrians* and p. 77.

Unitarians; only that our *Fathers* happened to get the better of *theirs*, and ſo by that means their Books were preſerved, and what theſe Men eſteem the *true Orthodox Writings* were loſt. Now, tho this be an impudent pretence, and may no doubt be proved to be ſo, by ſuch an exact Maſter of Eccleſiaſtical Antiquity as Dr. *Bull*; yet it ſeems to me much eaſier, to convince ſuch Men as theſe from *Scripture* and *Reaſon*, which are allowed to be the ſame on both ſides, than from *Authority*, when They and We are not agreed upon the ſame *Fathers*.

Another Reaſon, and that which principally determin'd me not to conſult the *Fathers* upon this Point was, becauſe, when I was ſatisfied from the *Scripture* and *Church Account* of this Article, that *God was One and Three* in ſuch a manner as my Reaſon told me was inconceivable, I thought it in vain to ſearch the *Fathers*, in order to know what Terms they had made uſe of to expreſs what was not to be expreſſed more clearly in any: beſides I was ſo far of the Dean's mind, as to be convinced it required great *care* and *application* to find out the *unanimous Senſe of the Fathers* upon this Doctrine; that it was *neceſſary to diſtinguiſh betwixt their Faith and Philoſophy*; and that their Faith when thus diſtinguiſhed was *plain* and *ſimple*, and juſt ſuch as we find it now in the *Scriptures*. I knew

p. 259.

knew very well, that the *Fathers* were extremely cautious of departing from the Language of Scripture, and that when they did change their way of ſpeaking, it fell out (as the Dean has obſerved) that *the unſcriptural Terms they were forced to uſe againſt the Hereticks, by degrees improved into great ſubtilties, and diſturbed the Church with very nice wrangling Diſputes*: For which reaſons I hoped I might be excuſed, if I took a ſhorter and eaſier way of proving the *Doctrine of the Trinity*, than by undertaking to *vindicate the Fathers and Schools from thoſe Obſcurities, Inconſiſtencies, and Contradictions, which*, the Dean ſays, *are generally charged on them*; and to rectifie all the *Improprieties of the Philoſophical Terms uſed by the Fathers*, which *the wiſeſt Men*, as he tells us, *have owned in them, when applyed to this ſacred Myſtery.*

p. 3.

p. 259.

p. 334.

Theſe were the Grounds I went upon, in not inſiſting upon a *Traditionary Proof* of the Doctrine of the *Trinity*; and I hope no ſober unprejudiced Perſon will be offended with me for taking the ſhorteſt, moſt effectual, and moſt unqueſtionable way of convincing my ſelf and others, of what was neceſſary to be believed upon this Subject: nor ſuppoſe that I do not think the Fathers very *good Guides* in Religious Controverſies, becauſe in this Point I was fully perſuaded I

p. 58.

had found my way without them; and I was ſure that the greateſt part of thoſe that err'd in wrong Paths, would not accept of their direction, tho never ſo clear and expreſs.

Had the *Scripture* ſeemed to me to contradict the common Faith of the *Church of England*, as it is now expreſſed in our Publick Offices of our Religion, I ſhould then have thought my ſelf obliged to conſult *Authority* in the matter; and ſhould have paid as great a deference as any Man was willing or able to do, to the unanimous conſent of the firſt and moſt antient *Catholick Writers*: but having no ſuch temptation to examine them upon this Head, nor having any *New Terms, Notions* or *Expoſitions*, that wanted their Patronage to reconcile them to *Scripture*, and the *general received Profeſſions of Faith*; I was content with ſhewing, that what I found in *Scripture* concerning the *Trinity*, was exactly agreeable to what the *Church* requires us now to believe of that Doctrine; and that this *Form of ſound words* founded upon Scripture, was conſiſtent with all the Principles of our *Reaſon*; and conſequently upon all theſe accounts was *a proper Object of our Faith.*

This is what I thought my ſelf concerned to offer, for the publick Juſtification of my ſelf and my Deſign, with reſpect to the *Conſiderations*; and having, as I am perſuaded, ſaid what is ſufficient to ſatisfie *others*, that my

my Intentions in writing about the *Trinity* were very good, however the Performance might fall ſhort of them; and that I have all that Reſpect for the *Fathers* which their Learned and Pious Works juſtly challenge from us, and which the *Church of England* requires to be paid them: I ſhall Addreſs my ſelf afreſh to the Dean, and ſhew him, that as much as he thinks fit to Blame and Condemn me, I have gone upon the *ſame Deſign* in the *Conſiderations*, which he acknowledges to be the beſt I could go upon, in a Diſcourſe of the Trinity; I have obſerved the *ſame Meaſures* he recommends; I am *more* concerned for *Myſteries*, rely *leſs* upon my *natural Reaſon*, and have a *greater* regard for the *Fathers* than even the Dean himſelf.

Now that the beſt *way of Managing the Controverſie of the Trinity* is not to Explain or Expound it, nor to enter into the Philoſophical Diſputes of *Fathers* and *Schoolmen*, but to keep cloſe to *Scripture*, and uſe no *new Terms*, is manifeſt from the Firſt Chapter of the Dean's laſt Book; where he aſſures us, that the *Faith* concerning the *Trinity* is *plain* and *certain, all* of it *that is neceſſary to the Purpoſes of Religion*; and that *the beſt way to ſettle this Controverſie upon its true ancient bottom*, is *to diſtinguiſh what is Fundamental from all Metaphyſical Speculations*; That *the Form of Baptiſm is the Rule and Standard of our Faith* in this Point, and was p 3.

always appealed to as ſuch by the Catholick Fathers;

p. 5. That *the Names and Characters of Father*
p. 6. *and Son are better underſtood, liable to leſs Diſputes, and convey to our Minds a more diſtinct Conception of God the Father and his Eternal Son, than any other artificial Terms*; and that

p. 4. therefore we ought not *to engage in Philoſophical Diſputes which we know little or nothing of, and which the Scripture takes no notice*

p. 6 *of*; but *we ſhould reduce the Controverſie as much as poſſibly we can to Scripture Terms*; *becauſe Artificial and Metaphyſical Terms divide even the profeſſors of the Catholick Faith, and give too juſt occaſion to the vain Boaſts and Triumphs of Hereticks.*

He has a great deal more to the ſame purpoſe in this Chapter, in order to ſhew

p. 7. the *abſolute neceſſity there is at preſent to take this Controverſie of the Trinity out of Terms of Art, that our Adverſaries may ſee that our Controverſie with them is not concerned in theſe Diſputes:* Which ſeems to me to be a full and perfect Confutation of what he has ſaid againſt my Account of the Trinity, in his Second Chapter; and for Defence of his own, in all the reſt of his Book: For that which he here adviſes is what I propoſed to my ſelf in the *Conſiderations*; and the whole drift of his preſent Book is to juſtifie his taking a contrary Method to this in the Former.

Since

Since therefore I have endeavoured to manage the Controverſie of the *Trinity*, in the manner the Dean is pleaſed to approve and recommend to others, tho' it was not ſo proper perhaps for him himſelf to be confined to the Rules he gave; I cannot ſee any reaſon for his charging me, as by plain Suggeſtions he often does, with *decrying Myſteries*, *preferring my Natural Reaſon to Scripture*, and *deſpiſing the Authority of the Fathers.*

To tax me with *Decrying Myſteries*, is to put me in the loweſt Rank of all the pretenders either to *Knowledge* or *Religion.* There's nothing in which a Man can demonſtrate his Ignorance of himſelf, and the whole Syſtem of things, more than by ſaying there are *no Myſteries in Nature*; and there cannot be a more abſurd way of denying *God* and *Revelation*, than by maintaining there are *no Myſteries in Revelation* and *the Scriptures.* I have not, I am confident, rendred my ſelf obnoxious to ſuch an Imputation as this, by any thing I have ſaid with relation to *Myſteries* in my Diſcourſe of the *Trinity*: For, what I chiefly contended for there, was, that the *Trinity* was a *Myſtery* not conceivable by any Notions our Minds were able to frame, and conſequently not capable of being rendred plainer than the Scripture Language made it, by any other Terms, *tho' never ſo wiſely choſen*: From whence it manifeſtly

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manifeſtly appears, that I think the *Doctrine of the Trinity* more a *Myſtery* than the Dean does; for he owns in the Preface to his Firſt *Vindication of this Doctrine*, that he has gotten *clear and more diſtinct Notions* of this great Myſtery *ſince the writing of that Book* than he *had before*; whereas I ſolemnly declare that I have not, after the *reading his Book*, and *writing my own*, any *clearer* or *more diſtinct Notions of the Trinity*, than reading the Scripture had before given me.

If therefore I allow that there *are Myſteries in Scripture*, and that the *Myſteries* we find there *ought to be believed*, and *cannot be explained*, as 'tis evident I do; what Ground has the Dean to charge me with preferring my *Reaſon* and *Natural Sentiments* to Scripture? I have not that confidence in my own Reaſon as he imagines I have: I do not think any more than he does, that *Scripture is always to be Expounded by our Natural Sentiments*; or that a *Trinity can be proved by Natural Reaſon*. And I am as ſenſible as the Dean pretends to be, that *I know nothing of ſuch a Diſtinction and Unity of Subſtance in the Deity as can help us to form any Notion of a Trinity in Unity, and defend it from the Charge of Contradiction and Impoſſibility when we have done.* From his own Experience he tells us, that *when we reduce* our Thoughts *of the Trinity into Terms of Art, we find our Minds confoun-*

p. 77.

p. 313.

p. 328.

confounded and perplex'd, and unable to form any diſtinct and eaſie Ideas. Nay, *let us turn over our Minds as long as we pleaſe, and change Words and Phraſes, we can find no Ideas to anſwer any Words of this nature*: And juſt ſo it is with me upon this Occaſion; Whatever Terms I make uſe of to expreſs the Trinity in, I am ſtill as far from comprehending it as I was before. p. 330.

But tho' our Experience be the ſame, our Conduct I perceive is different: For the Dean undertakes to give us a *very intelligible Account of a Trinity in Unity*, and it *ſeems to* him that he has performed it; that he has ſhewn us a *Natural demonſtration of a Trinity*, and made *the Generation of the Word, Whole of Whole, very conceivable*; So that, upon the *Concluſion* of the Matter, he is perſuaded, that, by vertue of *his largely Explaining* his *Idea of a Trinity in Unity, we have* got *an Idea of it* too, *that very Idea* which he has explained: viz. *One Abſolute Divinity, with Two Eternal, Eſſential Proceſſions in the Unity and Identity of Nature: The Eſſential Father, Self-originated Mind, with his Eternal Word, his Eternal Son, and the Eternal Spirit of Father and Son.* And now he thinks he has throughly and effectually done what he pretended to in his Firſt *Vindication*; and made his *Account of the Trinity as Plain and Intelligible* p. 259. p. 357. p. 331. p. 387. *Vindic.* p. 68.

as

as the Notion of One God, or of One Perſon in the Godhead. And he ſeems to have relyed very much upon his *own Natural Sentiments* in all his Performance; For he will allow no other Account of the Trinity but this to be True; becauſe that is the *only Account* p. 375. *of the Matter he can underſtand.* 'Tis plain the Three Perſons of the Trinity muſt be *Three Infinite Minds and Spirits,* be- p. 330. cauſe it is *impoſſible for him to form any other Notion of it.* If you talk of *Modes of Subſiſtence* that will never Explain the p. 348. Matter, becauſe *he never could Underſtand it; it is beyond his Philoſophy:* Exeept we take his Account of the *Doctrine of Relations, 'tis impoſſible rightly to underſtand what the Schools,* or any body elſe, *teach about a Trinity in Unity:* We muſt allow his *Natural Demonſtration of the Inſeparable Union of Fa-* p. 320. *ther and Son,* by an *inſeparable conſcious Life and Senſation,* becauſe there is *no other Notion poſſible that we can form of the Mutual In-Being of Father and Son:* If we p. 326. would have *a ſenſible Notion of a Trinity in Unity,* 'tis abſolutely *neceſſary* to conſult *his Doctrine of Relations.* And leſt ſuch *an Intelligible Notion of a Trinity and Unity,* as he has given us, ſhould not be entertain'd for want of ſufficient Authority from *Scripture* for it, *Scripture* muſt be Expounded to it; For that moſt certainly is *a Self-evident Propoſition, that*

Scripture

Scripture cannot contradict a natural Demonſtration and ſenſible Notion of a Trinity. He, I,
p. 129. *and another*, which are applied *to Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*, in *Scripture, muſt ſignifie Three as real diſtinct Perſons* when ſo applied there *as theſe words ſignifie in common Speech*; For, if we don't allow this, then *he who ſpeaks, and he to whom he ſpeaks, and he who is ſpoken of, muſt be one and the ſame Perſon*, which would be ſuch *perverſeneſs and deceit as does not become God*: And [illegible]e in the Godhead, who are *as real diſtinct Perſons* as theſe words, *I, He, and another* can make Three to be in *common ſpeech*, are, and muſt be, by the Dean's Hypotheſis, *Three Infinite Minds, Spirits*, &c. From which Argument it is manifeſt, that the Dean's *Notions, Ideas, and Explications* of a *Trinity in Union*, muſt be *Intelligible* and *Orthodox*, and no other, or elſe we muſt be forced to charge *God Almighty* with ſuch things as it is not fit to repeat.

This is the Dean's *way of Managing the Controverſie of the Trinity*: But for my part, notwithſtanding all the pains he has been at to enlighten me, I cannot yet form any *ſenſible Notion*, or be *led into a natural belief of a Trinity in Unity*. Tho' I agree with p. 358. him in all his former Experiences, I have not the ſame *feeling* he has of a *Mind, Word*, and *Spirit*; and therefore I have ibid. not yet been *taught* by the *natural Notion and Idea*

p. 359. *Idea of a Mind*, nor does my *natural Reaſon ſtrongly infer*, that there is ſuch a *Diſtinction* in the *Trinity*, as that ſignified by *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, *Eternal Mind*, *Word*, and *Spirit*. And being very well content with this my Ignorance, I don't think it proper to make any other uſe of my *natural Sentiments* upon the Subject of the *Trinity*; but to ſave my ſelf and others the fruitleſs and uneaſie trouble of *looking further than we can ſee*, by proving as evidently as I can, that no more is to be *conceived* of this Myſtery than what is in Scripture plainly *revealed* to us; and that, if *God thinks fit to reveal*

p. 387. *ſuch things to us as we have no Ideas of, we are concerned and obliged to believe them*; as the Dean urges in the ſame Page, where

ibid. he ſays, *We have an Idea of Trinity in Unity*: I do not pretend to be ſure from Principles of *natural Reaſon*, that *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt* muſt be *Three Infinite Minds*, becauſe they are diſtinguiſhed in *Scripture* by *Perſonal Pronouns* in the ſame manner

p. 18. p. 129. as *Three Men* are, as the Dean argues; Foraſmuch as it is poſſible that the *Perſonal Pronouns* uſed in Scripture may be applyed to *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, in ſome other Senſe than that of *Three Infinite Minds*, without our *charging God fooliſhly*: This, I ſay, ſeems very poſſible to me, becauſe *Father*, *Son*, and

and *Holy Ghoſt* are not, (as the Dean himſelf allows) *Three Perſons as Three Men are Three Perſons*, and *Three and One in God do not ſignifie what they do in Creatures:* I durſt not rely thus far upon my *natural Sentiments* when I writ the *Conſiderations*; and I am under the ſame Caution and Reſerve now: for I am more fully convinced than ever I was, that what the Dean aſſerts is very true; that *Natural Reaſon is a very bad and a very dangerous Expoſitor of Scripture in Supernatural Myſteries*, and *neither has any Authority* nor gives any Light *in theſe Matters.* p. 253. p. 252. p. 58.

Now the Caſe being thus as I have repreſented it, I think I may take upon me to ſay, that the Dean has no good Ground to accuſe me of placing too much Truſt in my own *Natural Sentiments*, and not giving a due Preference to *Scripture.* And a few of the like Remarks will ſerve to make it appear, that my Regard for the *Fathers* was ſuch as he could not poſſibly find fault with.

For, if *there is not one of all the Natural Repreſentations which are made by the Catholick Fathers of the Trinity, but what Literally and Philoſophically applied, would furniſh out ſome new Hereſie*; if *that Great Man S.* Auſtin *ſometimes miſs'd the true Notion after he had happily ſtarted it*; and the other Fathers p. 235. p. 201.

Fathers may be preſum'd liable to the ſame Deviations; *if there can be no other Catholick Senſe made of what the Fathers ſo univerſally teach, that there is in the Trinity* una Subſtantia, *but not* unus Subſiſtens, but only that which the Dean gives us: if, I ſay, Matters ſtand thus with the Fathers, as the Dean aſſures us they do; and 'tis plain, that never any body before him expounded the *Catholick Doctrine of the Trinity* as he has done; what reaſon could he poſſibly have to blame me, for not ſearching the *Fathers* for a *true Notion of a Trinity*, when he knew very well what danger there was of being miſtaken, without his particular guidance?

p. 203.

And indeed his aſſiſtance in underſtanding the *Fathers* was abſolutely neceſſary, to enable me to form a *true Catholick Notion of the Trinity* from their Writings, and to ſpeak intelligibly about it: for had I ventured alone, without ſuch a Guide, and found, as I perceive by him I muſt, that the *Fathers were cautious in calling the Three Divine Perſons, Three Natures, or Eſſences, or Subſtances*, I ſhould hardly have undertook to prove, that what *they called a Divine Perſon*, is, notwithſtanding their being *cautious* of ſaying it, *the Divine Eſſence, Nature* and *Subſtance*, and *nothing elſe*, and that *they* certainly *meant* ſo. But, had I never in all my reading met with any ſuch

p. 259.

p. 260.

Ib. 261.

ſuch Expreſſions uſed by the *Fathers* as *Three Minds*, or *Three Spirits, diſtinguiſhed by Three Self-conſciouſneſſes, and inſeparably united in One Mind by Mutual-conſciouſneſs*, I could never have prevailed with my ſelf to have ſtarted theſe new Terms upon a Subject that I was ſure could receive no further light by them, when they might probably *furniſh out ſome new Hereſie* to ſuch as would be apt to *apply them Literally and Philoſophically*; much leſs ſhould I have called in the *Fathers* to witneſs that *they* muſt *mean* thus, tho' they induſtriouſly avoiding ſpeaking ſo, for ſuch Reaſons as ought to have weighed with Me, as much as with Them. Neither ſhould I have called the Catholick Form of *One Subſtance and Three Hypoſtaſes, a Secondary Notion of a Trinity in Unity*, p. 312. which *we can form no diſtinct Idea of*; and this, in order to ſubſtitute my own new Account of the Doctrine, as *an intelligible Notion of a Trinity in Unity*; not like the other, which was made only to *ſecure the Catholick Faith againſt the Sabellian and Arian Hereſie*, but ſuch as would let us into the whole Secret of the Myſtery it ſelf. ibid. ibid.

Nay further, I have ſuch a Veneration for *Catholick and Apoſtolick Tradition*, that I do not only think it *ſafe and reaſonable to Expound Scripture as the Catholick Faith and Catholick Fathers Expound it, when the words of* p. 47.

Scripture will naturally and eaſily admit that ſenſe, which is all the Deference I can find that the Dean adviſes to be paid them; But, if ſome Paſſages of *Scripture* did not now ſeem to me to bear that *Traditionary Explication* of them which had conſtantly and univerſally prevailed from the Apoſtles days, I ſhould, notwithſtanding, think my ſelf obliged to acquieſce in it, without it manifeſtly appeared to *contradict* the plain Words and Deſign of Scripture; and I ſhould be very diſtruſtful of my Judgment of a Contradiction upon ſuch an Occaſion. And therefore the Dean has no cauſe at all to charge me with *rejecting a Traditionary Faith, and venturing to Expound Scripture by my natural Sentiments*; p. 55. when I am fully perſuaded, and perhaps more than the Dean is, that *this is a very unſafe Rule in Matters of pure Revelation, of which meer natural Reaſon is no competent judge.*

Thus have I Anſwered all the Articles of the Dean's Charge againſt me; and the greater I find it to be, the more I am at a loſs to know what Provocation it was grounded upon.

When the Dean's Firſt *Vindication of the Trinity* came out, I read it over with all the willingneſs to like it that a long reſpect for ſeveral of his other Writings had given me; but afterwards, when I ſet to conſider that Subject more cloſely my ſelf, I found my ſelf obliged

bliged to differ from him in his manner of Treating that Argument; and I could not help being ſenſible of the great Inconveniences it was liable to, before any body had expoſed them to publick view; ſo that I was not led, but only confirmed in my Judgment by thoſe *very Learned* and *Rational* Anſwers that were made to the Dean's Book. In the *Conſiderations* which were writ before, and publiſhed afterwards, for the Reaſons mentioned in the Preface to them, I had no thoughts either of *eſpouſing, or finding fault with* any particular Man's Notions: 'Twas Truth, and Information only I ſought after; and therefore my Reflections were all *General*, and aimed at *Things*, not *Perſons*. If my Notions differ'd from the Dean's, or fell in with other Mens, 'twas more than I could help, and more than I foreſaw when I began to write. I was very ſorry it ſo happened, that his Notions were not the ſame with mine; and I was glad to find that mine agreed with thoſe of ſo many other great Men as have appeared ſince upon the ſame Subject. And as for any other *private Deſign* or *Motive* of writing the *Conſiderations*, I am not in the leaſt conſcious to my ſelf of it. Since therefore the Dean's Quarrel to me ſeems to have no other Foundation but my being of different Sentiments from him, and preſuming to propoſe them to the World when I knew them to be ſo; I think it very requi-

ſite to ſay ſomething by way of Excuſe for my ſuppoſed Preſumption in this Matter.

IV. Fourthly and Laſtly then I ſhall offer ſome Reaſons why I think the Dean's *way of Managing the Controverſie of the Trinity* is not the moſt Expedient.

I do not here intend to enter into the Controverſie again, and ſhew how dangerous and ill-grounded an *Hypotheſis* the Dean's is, by examining all the Parts and Conſequences of it; this has been *unanſwerably* done already by a *better Hand*, with all the *Juſtneſs* and *force of Reaſoning* imaginable. My buſineſs is only to Defend my ſelf; and therefore I ſhall move no further, in a Matter, I think Ill begun by the Dean at firſt, and now unwarrantably purſued, than to give him ſome ſhort Account why I think ſo.

In the Firſt place then I cannot judge it Expedient to uſe ſo many *New Terms* as the Dean does to *Explain the Trinity*, when it cannot be rendred clearer to us by any of them than it was made before by the *Eſtabliſhed Forms* of Expreſſion.

In his former Diſcourſes upon the *Trinity* he calls the *Three Perſons* in the Godhead *Three Minds*, *Three Spirits*, *Three Subſtances*, *Eſſences*, and *Natures*; to theſe Expreſſions he adds in his

his Laſt Book, * *Three Selfs, Three Is's,* || *Three Singulars,* † *Three Sames, Three Wholes, One Abſolute Divinity, with Two Internal Proceſſions,* &c. The *Unity* of the *Three Perſons* is repreſented ſometimes as a *Specifick Sameneſs and Unity*; ſometimes as a *Natural* and *Eſſential Unity*, whereby a *Common Nature* is *One* in *Truth and Reality, not in Notion only*, as a *Species is*; which *Natural Unity* is ſaid afterwards to be a *Numerical Unity*, and *is One in Number*, but *does not ſignifie a Singular Nature as it does in Creatures.* In another place, *the Unity of the Divine Nature is neither a Unity of Singularity, nor a Specifick Unity of Nature, but bears ſome reſemblance and analogy to both*; and preſently after he aſſirms, that *all the names of a Specifick Sameneſs and Unity do in a more perfect and excellent manner belong to the Sameneſs and Unity of the Divine Nature, ſubſiſting in Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, than to the Sameneſs of the Human Nature*, as *Peter, James*, and *John*. And ſeveral other ſuch like Accounts has the Dean given us of the *Unity of God*, and *the Diſtinctions of the Perſons in the Godhead*. But, ſince 'tis evident to any Man that tries his Faculties this way, that none of all theſe Expreſſions advance his knowledge of the *Trinity* one ſtep further than the *Scripture-Language* of *One God*, who is *Father, Son*,

* p. 21. || p. 29. † p. 32. 373. 174. 183. *ibid.* 195. 197.

and *Holy Ghoſt*, or the *Eccleſiaſtical Form* of *One Divine Nature* and *Three Perſons* had carried it, to what purpoſe is it to amuſe and perplex us with new uninſtructive Sounds?

p. 371. When the Dean *freely acknowledges*, that the Three Perſons in the Godhead *cannot properly be called Three Infinite Minds and Spirits*; and he thinks *thoſe Terms of*

112. *Three Subſtances and Three Minds may* with *good reaſon* be *let alone*; why are they inſiſted upon again, and *New Books*, as well as *New Terms*, multiplied for their Juſtification? It

198. is by his own confeſſion, *very difficult what Three to call Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, ſo as to avoid the Hereſies of both Extreams: We have nothing*, he tells us,

p. 9. *in Nature like this*, and therefore *we know not by what Names to call it. Thoſe who*

ibid. *have moſt critically examined the Force of Words, find them all, upon ſome occaſion or other, defective or improper for this purpoſe.*

p. 11. This he is very ſenſible of, and therefore *profeſſes*, 'That he can ſee no 'neceſſity why we muſt find out a common 'Name for the Three in the bleſſed Trinity, 'when the Scripture has given us no common 'Name for them; much leſs why we ſhould 'diſpute eternally about the Propriety and 'Uſe of ſuch Words, to hazard the Catholick 'Faith, at leaſt the Honour and Reputation 'of it, together with the Peace of the Church.

'If

'If I am asked (ſays he) not only who, but 'what the Three in the Ever-bleſſed Trinity 'are? I know no better Anſwer to make than 'what the Scripture has taught me, that they 'are *God the Father, God the Son, and God the* '*Holy Ghoſt*; which ſignifie all that can be ex-'preſſed by any Artificial and Unſcriptural 'Words; is an Anſwer liable to no Exceptions 'or Miſrepreſentations, and in which all muſt 'agree who believe a Trinity; and it ſhames 'and ſilences all thoſe Diſputes which are of-'ten occaſioned by other Words, tho' never 'ſo wiſely and reaſonably choſen.

And this is my very Reaſon why I could never approve of the Expediency of the Dean's way of *Vindicating* and *Explaining* the *Doctrine of the Trinity*; which I am not able to expreſs more fully than he has done.

But, beſides that all the *New Terms* and Forms of Expreſſion uſed by the Dean *convey no New Ideas to us*, nor carry our Knowledge of the *Trinity* any further than the *Scripture-Language* and the *Eccleſiaſtical Terms* now in uſe do; as the Dean has, in ſundry places of his Book very ſatisfactorily made out: Beſides this, I ſay, the Inexpediency of the Dean's Method of *Vindicating the Doctrine of the Trinity* ſeems very plain to me upon another Account; and that is, Becauſe the Defence of the New Terms he had ſtarted ingages him

in a great many Philoſophical Niceties, and Diſtinctions, that are very liable to a wrong Conſtruction, and adminiſter occaſion to Hereticks and Profane Men to expoſe the Doctrine of the Trinity, and to weak Chriſtians to doubt of it; As will eaſily appear by a few Inſtances

The Thing which the Dean aſſerted and endeavoured to prove in his Firſt *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity* was, That *the Three Perſons in the Trinity are as Diſtinct as Three Men are.* This put him upon uſing thoſe Phraſes of *Three Minds, Spirits*, &c. then; and this has ſince put him upon looking out for ſeveral ways of Reconciling ſuch a *Diſtinction* as this with the *Unity of God.* Particularly in his Laſt Book he thinks he has ſolved the Matter by ſhewing, that the Three Divine Perſons *are inſeparably United:* But this Argument does not ſeem to me to have Force enough to defend his Notion of a Trinity from the Charge of *Tritheiſm.* For if *Three compleat individual Minds* which are *cloſely and intimately United by God*, and may be ſuppoſed to be for ever ſo United, are, as the Dean allows, as much *Three compleat individual Minds* ſtill, as they were before they were thus United, every body will not be able to ſee, why *Three Infinite Minds inſeparably United*, may not be as much *Three compleat individual Minds*, as *Three Finite Minds*,

Vindic. p. 104.

Pr. Stat. p. 301.

Minds, ſeparably United are. If the Union be as *cloſe and intimate* in the one Caſe as in the other, (as there is nothing alledged in this Argument to the contrary) it will not be eaſie to perceive how the Manner, or Duration of the Union ſhould alter any thing in the Diſtinction. But *Three Divine Natures, tho' ſpecifically and perfectly alike*, the Dean owns, *would unavoidably be Three Gods*; And I think 'tis very plain, that if *Three Divine Natures* could poſſibly be, or be conceived, we muſt conſider them as *Naturally, Eſſentially*, and *Inſeparably* United; and therefore I am not ſatisfied that ſuch an *inſeparable Union* of *Three Infinite Minds* is ſufficient to prove them not to be *Three Gods*. p. 204.

And as the Dean's Notion of an *Inſeparable Union* does not come up to the Proof he intended it for, ſo neither are his Diſtinctions of *Abſolute, Perſonal*, and *Relative*, which run through all his Defences, ſufficient to juſtifie his Doctrine from the Imputation he wards againſt.

For if he does mean *Three Minds, Spirits, Subſtances, Natures*, and *Eſſences* in a *Perſonal* and not an *Abſolute Senſe*, as he often tells us he does, yet he takes care at other times to let us know, that *Perſon is not a Relative Term*; That *a Perſon, as a Perſon, is Eſſence and Subſtance*; That *a Divine Perſon is the Divine Eſſence, Subſtance* p. 19. 264. 271. 273.

and

and *Nature, and nothing elſe*; And if he tells us withal, that *the Father, Son, and Holy*
p. 16. *Ghoſt* are *each of them Eſſence, Subſtance, Subſiſtence, in the moſt perfect and abſolute Senſe of theſe Terms*: Any Man that lays all theſe things together, will be apt to conclude, that Three *Perſonal* Minds, Natures, Subſtances, *&c.* mean as much as Three *Abſolute* Minds, Natures, Subſtances, *&c.* do.

So in like manner, tho' he ſhould call the Three Perſons in the Godhead Three *Relative Minds* or *Subſtances*; or, if that ſhould
379. not be ſo proper, *One Abſolute Subſtance and Two Relative Subſtances*; Yet if this be only an *Arbitrary Diſtinction*, and he does not know any *difference between Three Sub-*
378. *ſtances and Three Relative Subſtances* himſelf, as he plainly intimates; what advantage will it be to his *whole Account* of the Matter to *reſolve it into the diſtinction be-*
379, &c. *tween Abſolute and Relative*, which he lays ſo much ſtreſs upon?

A great many other Paſſages there are throughout the Dean's Laſt Book, which are *very liable to Heretical Senſes*; But, my
p. 115. buſineſs being only to *Defend* and not *Anſwer*, I chuſe to ſay no more than will juſt vindicate me for departing from the Dean's way of writing concerning the Trinity: Nor would I be thought to infer from what I have been forced to ſay, that the Dean really intended

tended or deſigned to eſtabliſh *Tritheiſm* or any other *Hereſie:* all my Opinion in the Caſe is, That a New Hypotheſis offering it ſelf to his Thoughts, the Satisfaction that immediately flowed in upon him, might probably hinder him from ſeeing to the End of it; and ſo it was propoſed without any apprehenſion of the Conſequences it was attended with: Afterwards, an eager deſire of maintaining the Invention produced us abundance of new and ſtrange Philoſophy, and a great many different Methods of improper Speaking; which was perfectly unavoidable upon a Subject where no Philoſophy was uſeful, or any change of Language proper. I take the liberty to call the Dean's Hypotheſis his *Invention*, becauſe I thought it ſo at firſt, and his great fondneſs for it ſince has confirmed me in my Opinion. I know there are ſome who believe his Notions concerning *Self-conſciouſneſs* and *Mutual-conſciouſneſs*, &c. might have been taken out of *A Moral Eſſay concerning the Soul of Man*, written originally in *French*; becauſe the Author of that Diſcourſe has the ſame way of *Diſtinguiſhing* and *Uniting Minds* as the Dean has; But then he makes *Two Minds United by Mutual-conſciouſneſs* to be but *One Perſon*, which ſeems to overthrow the Dean's whole Hypotheſis, and conſequently to acquit him from borrowing it from thence. But whether the Dean had his Notions from this, or any other Author, or not,

not, I am not in the leaſt concerned to know, nor ſhould have told him of it, if I had certainly known who he was oblig'd to for them. Whether the Dean took a right way of Managing the Controverſie of the Trinity is all that I am enquiring after; and it would not give me a better or a worſe Opinion of that, to know, either that his Notions were his own, or another Man's: For whoſoever they belong to, I ſhall always be of the ſame mind the Dean once was, that there *may be good Reaſon to let them alone.*

This I have endeavoured to ſhew him was *Proper* upon Two Accounts already; and there is another *good Reaſon* why the Dean's attempt to Explain the Trinity *ought* to have been let alone; and that is, becauſe it is directly contrary to the Methods obſerved by the *Catholick Church*, and by *all particular Churches* and Societies of Chriſtians. It is very well known, how long it was before any *Unſcriptural Terms* were Eſtabliſhed in the *Catholick Church*; *with* what difficulty the *Nicene Fathers* were firſt prevailed upon to uſe any; and how ſtrictly and Religiouſly *all particular Churches* have ſtuck to thoſe Ancient Determinations: And *His Majeſty's Injunctions* are a late Inſtance how neceſſary the *Governours* of our *Engliſh Church* think it at preſent, that no private Perſons ſhould take the liberty of departing from the *Publick received Forms* of ſpeaking upon ſuch Points as the *Trinity* and *Incarnation.* Upon which

which Grounds I cannot imagine but the ſtarting *New Terms* and Notions, and multiplying *more* and *newer* in defence of them muſt be inconſiſtent with that deference we owe to *Ancient*, and *Preſent Authority*; if the Undertaking was only uſeleſs, and would not hazard the Peace of the Church, as very likely it would. And therefore I cannot approve the Dean's attempt of *Explaining the Trinity* by *New Terms of Expreſſion*, becauſe it ſeems to me wholly unſuitable to the Conduct and Deſign of the *Fathers* and *Governours* of the Catholick Church in all Ages; which was keeping as cloſe to Scripture as they could, uſing but few other Terms, and thoſe very conſtantly; and not for Explication, but only to ſecure the True Faith from Falſe and Heretical Interpretations, and to preſerve Peace among Chriſtians. And as the Deſign it ſelf, ſo likewiſe the Manner in which the Dean propoſes it has not all thoſe marks of Reſpect which I think are due to *Authority*: For he is not content to offer his New Scheme as a thing that might probably help to ſettle ſome weak Chriſtians in their belief of a *Trinity*, or to Anſwer ſome Objections of a Cavelling Philoſophical Adverſary; but as ſuch *a Form of Sound Doctrine*, as all Chriſtians are at their utmoſt peril obliged to embrace and hold faſt. It will not ſerve our turn to ſubſcribe to the *Church-Terms*, or to follow the *Fathers* Account of them. To ſay,

That

Vindic. p. 66. That *Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt are Three Perſons, and not Three Infinite Minds and Spirits, is Hereſie and Nonſenſe*; As for the *Father's Notion of One Subſtance and Three Hypoſtaſes, there's no Idea to be formed of it*; and their τρόπου ὑπάρξεως *no Catholick Senſe can be made of*, without his Expoſition be taken; We *muſt make* his Account of the Trinity *the Rule of our Speaking, if we would fit our Words to the Nature of Things*; every body elſe muſt *grow out of conceit with their own Philoſophy*; and they will *ſee Reaſon* to do ſo, ſince there *is no Account of the Matter to be underſtood* but his. Thus are we put under a neceſſity of uſing the ſame way of Speaking he has done, and no other Terms whatſoever, or of undergoing the cenſure of *Hereſie and Nonſenſe*. If a learned diſtinct Writer, who had been always uſed to great niceneſs and exactneſs of Speech, ſhould be ſo cautious of explaining the Three in the Godhead as to call them only *Three Somewhats*, for want of a more determined Name to give to what he thought Inexplicable; He muſt ſay further, that they are *Three Minds*, or elſe *the Wit of Man can't ſecure him from Sabellianiſm*. When I came to conſider this Matter, I did not think fit to uſe any Name at all for the Three in the Trinity; for the Dean's Reaſon before mentioned, be-

Pr. Stat. p. 332.

p. 373.

p. 388.

p. 375.

p. 73.

cauſe

cauſe *we having nothing in Nature like this, I did not know by what Name to call it*; and I was ſo far of his Opinion in the Matter, as to believe that there might be a *demonſtration, that there can be no Common Name for theſe Three.* But for all that, becauſe I did not ſay, they were *Three Minds, Spirits, Subſtances*, &c. I am made a *Sabellian*, tho' I expreſſed my ſelf as fully as I could in a Negative manner againſt that Hereſie: And, I confeſs, I do not think it proper to uſe any Poſitive Terms but what the *Scripture* and the *Church* have uſed; and I do not think they ſhould be Explained any other way than Negatively. p. 9.

When the Dean can get it Eſtabliſhed in the *Catholick Church*, that there are *Three Diſtinct Infinite Minds, Spirits and Subſtances in the Godhead*, yet ſo as *to be indiviſibly and inſeparably One Infinite Subſtance, Mind, and Spirit*; that is, ſo as not to be *Three Infinite Subſtances, Minds and Spirits*; the *Orthodoxy* of the Phraſe might not perhaps be ſcrupled, if the Impropriety of it could be diſpens'd with. But ſince the Catholick Eccleſiaſtical Form of *One God* and *Three Perſons*, has continued ſo long among us, and is ſtill the fixt way of Speaking; ſince the Dean's Hypotheſis was unknown to the Fathers, or cautiouſly avoided by them; ſince, after his publication of it, it has been ſolemnly rejected by a Great and Learned Univerſity, and none of our Learned p. 112.

ned Biſhops and Doctors that have writ after him upon the Trinity have taken it up, but ſeveral of them have particularly expreſſed their diſlike of it; ſince by his own confeſſion it is *liable to a Tritheiſtick Senſe*, and had better have been *let alone*; and, as he himſelf obſeves, the *Sabellian*, *Arian*, and other Hereſies *proceeded from a fear of Plurality of Gods*; And ſince we are, for many weighty Reaſons, *enjoyned* by Authority to uſe no New Terms, I will never give my ſelf leave to expreſs my belief of the Trinity in any words but what I find in the *Scripture* and our Publick *Eccleſiaſtical Terms*; and I think my ſelf obliged to Explain them no otherwiſe than by a denial of all thoſe *Heretical* Opinions which the *Catholick Church* has conſtantly rejected, and made uſe of ſome unſcriptural Terms for no other end but to declare her rejection of: So that to any Man that asks me, what I mean by *Three Perſons*? I think it ſufficient to ſay, that I do not mean *Three Names*, *Offices*, or *Relations*, *Three Attributes* or *Parts of God*; nor *Three Infinite Minds*, *Spirits* and *Subſtances*; nor One Infinite *Uncreated Being*, *and Two Creatures*; but ſomething elſe, which is neither of all theſe, and which I am not able to conceive or expreſs: And I believe there is ſome ſuch *inconceivable Diſtinction* in the Godhead, conſiſtent with the Unity of God, and the proper Foundation of all thoſe Marks and Expreſſions of Diſtinction

p. 73, &c.

applied

applied in Scripture to *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, becauſe I am perſuaded the *Scripture* has ſaid ſo, and neither *Natural Reaſon*, nor *Catholick Tradition*, contradict that Senſe I underſtand Scripture in upon this Article.

Thus have I finiſhed the uneaſie Task the Dean ſet me; and I think I have ſaid no more than what was abſolutely neceſſary to be ſaid in my own Defence, and a great deal leſs than the Dean's Provocation gave me Warrant to ſay. I have heard much of the Unfairneſs Men of Controverſie often treat one another with, but I never thought there could be ſo Remarkable an Inſtance of it ſhewn, as the Dean has very ſenſibly convinced me there may. When I read his Anſwer to the *Conſiderations*, I was amazed to find ſuch Meanings and Conſequences drawn from thence, as I was before an utter ſtranger to; and I was perfectly at a loſs to determine whether I ever writ, or the Dean ever read that Diſcourſe: But his frequent quotation of my Words having ſatisfied me, that I was the Man the Dean aimed at, and that he had had the *Patience* to read ſo much of what I had writ, as would ſerve ſome End or Purpoſe he had in writing himſelf; I cannot yet account for his way of Treating me: 'Tis hard to imagine how 'twas poſſible for him to miſunderſtand me ſo much

as he appears to have done; and I dare not give my ſelf leave to believe, that taking me right, he deſignedly miſrepreſented me. But, whatever Principles the Dean went upon, I thought my ſelf obliged not to imitate the Practiſe; and therefore I have been very careful not to charge him with any Meanings, Conſequences, or Deſigns which he diſclaims; and wherever I have uſed his Words, I have done it in the Senſe they manifeſtly bear in the particular places cited, without inferring from thence, that the Dean's ſettled Opinion or Intention is what it appears to be there; becauſe 'tis very certain, that in different places of his Book he ſeems to be of a different Judgment, and to have contrary Views. For my part, all the Reflections I allow my ſelf to make upon the Dean's whole management of the Controverſie he has been ſo long engaged in, are theſe: That he undertook the *Vindication of the Trinity* upon ſuch an *Hypotheſis* as, (by his own acknowledgment ſince) was liable to an *Heretical* and *Tritheiſtick* Conſtruction; That he has been very angry with thoſe that were at ſome pains to convince him it was ſo; That he has written two or three hundred Sheets to prove that the *Three Perſons in the Trinity* muſt be called Three Minds, Spirits, *&c.* when he owns himſelf now that there are no Terms *better underſtood*, and *convey to our minds more diſtinct Conceptions* of the Three

in

in the Godhead, than *Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*; That, notwithſtanding his being very ſenſible that *all Words are either defective, or improper for this purpoſe*; He has ſpent Nine Sheets in expoſing me for aſſerting the ſame thing, and upon that ground declining the uſe of his Terms; That, for this very Reaſon only that I know of, he has Treated me in ſuch a manner as would juſtifie ſeverer methods of return than I have taken; And that, if I had not *found fault* ſo very *civilly* as I did, I had probably received much *Civiler Uſage* from the Dean than he has been pleaſed to afford me.

All this I think I have very good Reaſon to ſay; and I am ſure I do the Dean no manner of injury by ſaying it; not only becauſe 'tis all very true, but becauſe I am firmly perſuaded every body that has read this Controverſie will make the ſame Judgment, without being diſpoſed to it by what I offer.

I am very ſorry I am obliged to deliver my Thoughts thus publickly; but the Dean has faln upon me in ſuch a manner as not to leave me the liberty of neglecting my own Defence. I am not ſo fooliſhly concerned for the reputation of Writing or Arguing well, as to undertake a Vindication of my ſelf upon any ſuch account; I could have been content to have received Correction for an improper or unwary way of expreſſing my ſelf

upon a concerning Point of Religion; And I am willing to make great allowances for a a more than ordinary Zeal in a juſt and weighty Cauſe. Had I no other ground of Complaint, I ſhould not have thought an Anſwer neceſſary: But when my Honeſty and Integrity are call'd in queſtion, 'twould be a Crime to be Silent; and not to Anſwer a falſe Charge of this nature, would be to make it True.

Now this is my Caſe at preſent: For 'tis plain to any one that reads the *Conſiderations*, that I do not *make it my whole buſineſs* there *to prove, that the Sabellian Notion of the Unity of God, or of One ſingle Perſon, and of Three Names, Titles, Characters, Extrinſecal Reſpects and Relations, is the true Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity.* Was I ſuch an open profeſs'd *Sabellian* as the Dean repreſents me here, he need not nave taken ſo much pains to prove me one, and I ſhould not be ſo abſurd as to think my ſelf injur'd. But that which I chiefly complain of now is, that the Dean ſuppoſes that I am a ſecret *Sabellian*; that *I am not ſo Fair and Equal as I pretended to be*; that I have *uſed Art in palliating this Hereſie*; that I have ſome *Expreſſions* which *would betray an unwary Reader to believe me Orthodox*; but, that *he has taken off the Diſguiſe*, and diſcovered the *Artifice*. *It does not appear*

Preſ. State p. 103.

p. 99. 101. 111. 101. 114.

pear to him that I believe one word concerning the Incarnation of God. I do indeed, he allows, ſay ſomewhat upon this Point that *ſounds well*, but I *don't ſpeak out*; ſo that the Reſult of his whole Account of the Matter is, That *the Conſiderer*, by an *Artificial* and *Diſhoneſt* way of Writing, has managed Things in ſuch a manner, that *we have loſt the Trinity and Incarnation, and muſt part with every thing that is peculiar and eſſential to Chriſtianity, with them.* By which, and a great many other Paſſages of the like nature, his Readers are induced to believe, that notwithſtanding I profeſs and undertake to defend the *Doctrine of the Trinity* as it is profeſs'd now in the Church of *England*, and ſolemnly declare the ſincerity of my Intentions in writing upon the Subject, yet I do not *believe a word* of it, but write *artificially*, with an *expreſs* purpoſe and deſign to betray the True Catholick Faith, and introduce *Sabellianiſm.* This, I ſay, is the plain obvious Inference from his Words, tho' at the ſame time I muſt confeſs, I do not believe he really thinks ſo ill of me as this comes to himſelf; but only that he urges things ſo home, purely to drive me into His Hypotheſis, by engagaing me to avoid the ſcandal of being reckon'd a *Sabellian.* p 20.

But whatever his Aim and Intention in Writing was, which I do not take upon me peremptorily to determine, he has made it abſolutely

abſolutely neceſſary for me to Juſtifie my ſelf upon this Occaſion; becauſe there's no fence againſt the Effects of his Inſinuation without it. Whether I was an *open Sabellian, or downright Socinian* (as the Dean ſometimes calls me) I may ſafely leave to thoſe that read the *Conſiderations* to decide; but that I was not a ſecret *artificial Heretick*, muſt be ſhewn in a *Defence*. For tho' my Words bear the ſame Senſe whether I write again, or no; and my Readers are as good judges of that as my ſelf; yet, as to the ſincerity of my Deſign in uſing ſuch Words, I am the only Perſon that know that; and therefore, if any body elſe queſtions it, and I am quiet under the Accuſation, nothing that I ſaid before would defend me from the Suſpicions I ſhould be expoſed to from my preſent Silence.

p. 100, 112, 122, &c.

This it was, that put me under a neceſſity of offering theſe Papers to the World: For, as I never will give any Man a juſt occaſion to ſuſpect my Integrity, ſo will I never bear any Man's unjuſt ſuſpicion of it. In all other reſpects the Dean, or any body elſe, may make as free with me as they pleaſe, at the expence of their own Character: But in this tender and Important Point, I ſhall always take care to do my ſelf Juſtice, where I have any apprehenſion of ſuffering by my not doing it; and I ſhall always endeavour to be Juſt to my ſelf, without being wanting in my Charity to others.

FINIS.

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ERRATA.

PAGE 6. line 7. for *receiving* read *reverencing*. l. 8. after *without* inſert *ever*. p. 8. l. 16. for *receiving* r. *reverencing*. p. 9. l. 12. for *the ſame* r. *this*. p. 10. l. 17. for *many* r. *any*. p. 11. l. 22. for *diſtinction* r. *definition*. p. 12. l. 1. for *as* r. *what*. p. 16. l. 14. for *perſons* r. *perſon*. p. 18. l. 18. for *terms* r. *forms*. p. 27. l. 18. for *wherever* r. *whatever*. p. 31. l. 21. for *this* r. *their*. p. 38. l. 8. dele *our*. p. 41. l. 20. for *Revelation* r. *Religion*. p. 42. l. 5. for *clear* r. *clearer*. p. 45. l. 18. for *Union* r. *Unity*. p. 61. l. 10. for *Terms* r. *Forms*. ibid. laſt line but one, for *Church-Terms* r. *Church-Forms*. p. 64. l. 14. for *Terms* r. *Forms*.